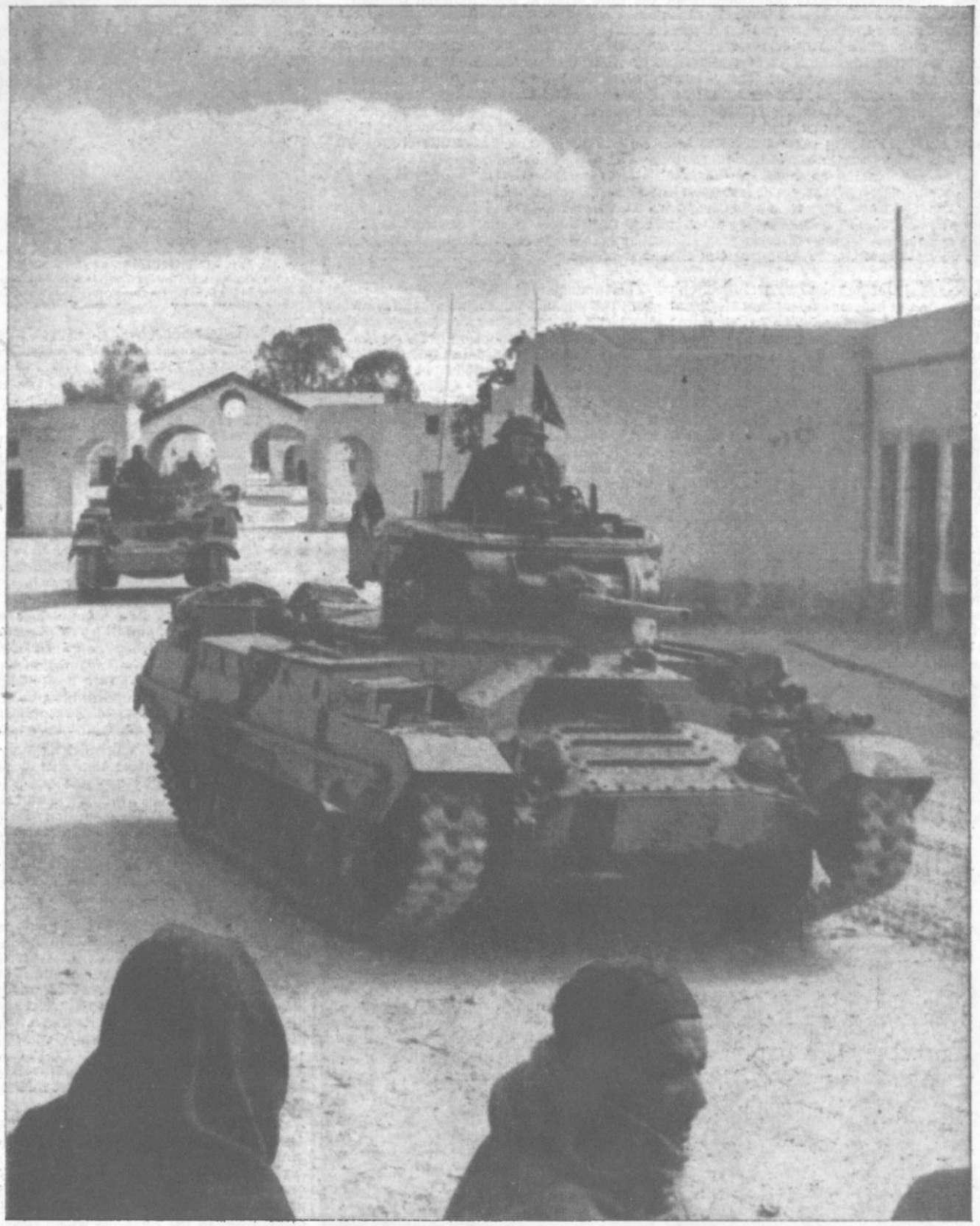
Vol 6 **The War Illustrated** N° 751

SIXPENCE — Edited by Sir John Hammerton — APRIL 2, 1943



INTO TUNISIA SWEEPS THE 8th ARMY. Where along the Mediterranean shore Italian Tripolitania meets French Tunisia there is a belt of marshland, of swamps which are sometimes lakes. But this natural obstacle was swiftly countered by the 8th Army's sappers, who flung a pair of wooden bridges across one of the lakes and so enabled the advance to continue. Pouring across the frontier, Montgomery's troops occupied Ben-Gardane, first of the Tunisian townships, on Feb. 15, 1943: this photo shows Valentine tanks entering the town.

NO. 152 WILL BE PUBLISHED FRIDAY, APRIL 16

THE BATTLE FRONTS

by Maj.-Gen. Sir Charles Gwynn, K.C.B., D.S.O.

AT the time of writing (mid-March 1943) it is not yet certain how serious the reverses the Allies have suffered during the first two weeks of March will prove to be, or whether the notable successes they have achieved will have an even greater effect. The Germans have undoubtedly, for the time being at least, relieved the dangerous situation of their army in the Donetz ; but it has yet to be seen whether the great efforts they are making to exploit that success will achieve results far-reaching enough to justify the expenditure of reserves incurred. If the attempt to recapture Kharkov has been made from motives of prestige and to offset their enforced abandonment of the Vyazma and Demyansk salients, it may prove a dangerously wasteful employment of their reserve strength, inconsistent with their announced strategic policy of shortening their front in order to recover their offensive power.

In spite of their reverses in the south, the Russians have had notable successes in the centre and north ; they retain the initiative, but all the same have still formidable resistance to overcome before achieving results of decisive importance.

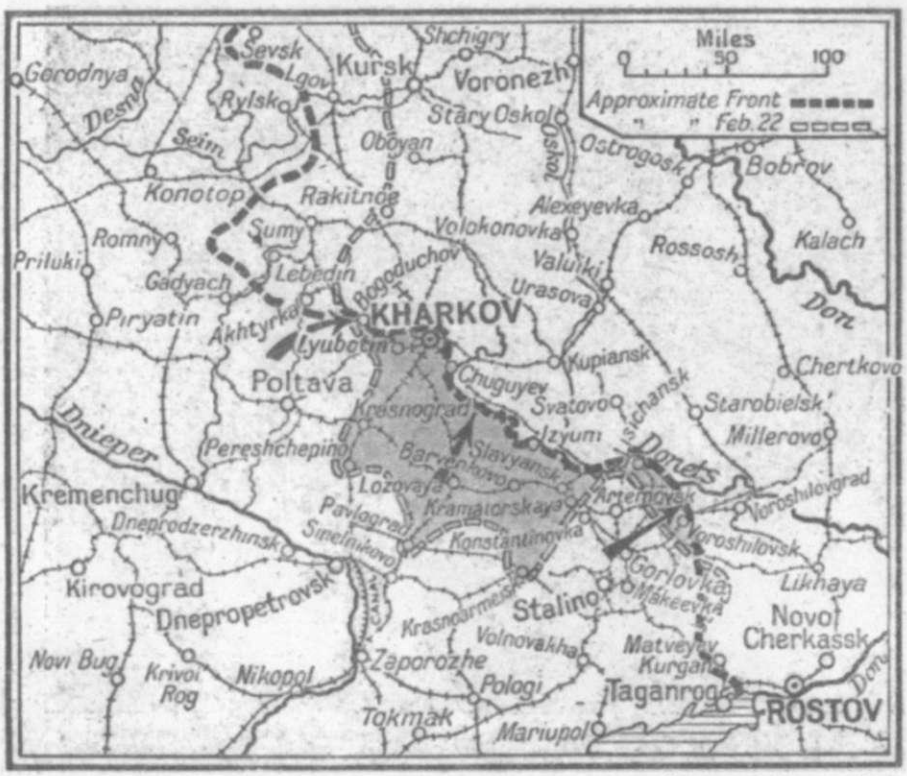
In Tunisia in the same period—the first half of March—the 1st Army, though it recovered almost all the ground overrun in Rommel's attack, has been pushed back, though not to a serious extent, in the north. On the balance it is improbable that it has yet fully regained its offensive potentialities. On the other hand, Rommel's costly failure to disturb Montgomery's preparations has probably weakened considerably his capacity to meet the 8th Army's attack when it comes.

CITIZENS OF KURSK return to their homes. It was announced on Feb. 8, 1943 that the Red Army had recaptured this important town on the central front. *Photo, U.S.S.R. Official*

RUSSIA During the first part of March it became evident that German counter-attacks in the Donetz basin and from the Dnieper bridgeheads were increasing in strength ; and that German claims to have recaptured a number of towns taken by the Russian encircling thrusts were justified. It was, however, not till the end of the first week, when the Russians admitted withdrawal from eight important towns, that it became certain that the Germans had reopened the main railway communications from the Donetz to the Dnieper and Poltava.

At the same time it became evident that with reserves in the Donetz basin and with divisions which had reached the Dnieper from the west, the Germans had collected a force, amounting to twenty-five divisions, capable of staging a counter-offensive of considerable weight, and that they proposed to use it for the recapture of Kharkov. As I write, in the middle of the month, they have in fact achieved this object and may exploit their success further.

This undeniable reverse may be ascribed partly to the luck of the weather favouring the Germans, and even more to the fact that they possessed an intact railway system to facilitate the rapid concentration of reserves. The bold Russian thrusts which almost completely isolated the Germans in the Donetz owed their initial success to the rapid advance of armoured formations which caught the Germans unprepared. To consolidate their gains and to meet the inevitable counter-attacks, they needed the support of infantry and artillery masses. But without railways—those in existence could not be used till their gauge was changed—the Russians were dependent mainly on sledge transport ; and when the unexpectedly early thaw came their main bodies were largely immobilized. Heavily counter-attacked by superior forces and without hope of support, retreat of the armoured spearheads was inevitable, and in retreat they evidently suffered heavily. The Eastern pursuing force was checked by a defensive line formed on the Upper Donetz, but, concentrating a great mass of tanks to the west on a narrow front, the Germans penetrated the Russian rallying position in spite of fierce resistance.



GERMAN GAINS AT KHARKOV. Retaken by the Red Army on Feb. 16, Kharkov became the target of a heavy enemy counter-thrust, and on March 14, 1943 the Germans claimed to have recaptured the great city, and the loss was admitted by the Russians shortly afterwards. This map shows the approximate front at Feb. 22 and at March 13, 1943; the shaded area is the territory regained by the Germans in their Kharkov thrust. *By courtesy of The Times*

That is what happened ; but it is not yet clear what German intentions are. Their primary purpose was, no doubt, to remove the threat of encirclement, possibly only in order to permit the withdrawal of the army in the Donetz basin to the Dnieper, which would provide the shortest defensive line. The question is whether the recovery of Kharkov was undertaken only as an extension of their original plan in order to deprive the Russians of a base of great value for the continuance of their offensive towards the Middle Dnieper ; or does it mean that the Germans now intend to retain their hold on the Donetz basin and to try to re-establish the defensive front they held last winter, running northwards from Taganrog to Kursk and Orel ? Has there, in fact, been a change of plan to exploit the opportunity offered by an unexpected degree of success ; and, if so, to what extent can exploitation be carried ?

The tenacity with which the Germans are clinging to Orel in spite of the danger of its encirclement certainly suggests an intention to recover last winter's line. On the other hand, this would entail operations at a time when mud conditions are likely to become worse and in an area where recaptured railways would enable the Russians to bring up reinforcements, whereas the Germans would be dependent on motor transport.

ALREADY the Germans have had heavy casualties ; and it must be questionable whether they are capable of a sustained effort under unfavourable conditions for mobile operations. The recapture of Kharkov for the time being may therefore be the limit of their immediate intentions. It may have prestige value and must undoubtedly affect the extension of the Russian offensive west of Kursk. These are points for consideration, but they do not provide a basis for definite conclusions.

Russian successes on the Moscow front undoubtedly offset to some extent reverses in the south. The capture of Rzhev—opening railway communications between Moscow and Veliki Luki—is of special immediate importance. It will enable greater weight to be given to the offensive which threatens the main line of German lateral communications. Its capture has also entailed what may be called the semi-voluntary abandonment of the rest of the great Vyazma salient. This on the one hand exposes Smolensk to attack, and on the other removes a potential

TUNISIAN FRONT. In the north the 1st Army retired from Sejenane on Mar. 4th; in the centre the Anglo-Americans consolidated their gains to the east of Sbeitla; while in the south Rommel was meeting the 8th Army's attack on the Mareth Line. This map shows approximate battle-line at March 13. *By courtesy of The Times*

easy, quick, or decisive victory can be expected. As at Alamein, it is likely to be a stage-by-stage affair, and Rommel has still sufficient armour to make formidable counter-attacks should opportunities arise.

How far the 1st Army now constitutes a real menace to Rommel's line of retreat it is impossible to judge. It is unlikely, with the growing threat of the 8th Army, that Rommel will be able to repeat his attempt to eliminate the menace if it exists. The possibility that he may strike at the Americans again cannot, however, be altogether discounted if Montgomery's attack is held up or delayed.

Von Arnim's attacks on the left of the 1st Army, although they have not achieved their main object of cutting lines of communication, have had rather disconcerting success. It seems clear that the nature of the country and weather conditions make defence of a long, lightly held front difficult. The enemy can always concentrate superior forces at a selected point, and the nature of the country favours the exploitation of infiltration tactics. Until General Anderson is in a position to undertake offensive operations on a large scale the disadvantages of defence must be accepted.

MEDENINE, situated close to the Mareth Line, was taken by the 8th Army on Feb. 20, 1943, after it had been looted by the Germans. Here is a view of its wrecked buildings. *Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright*

FAR EAST The total annihilation of the Japanese convoy that was attempting to reinforce New Guinea was, an outstanding achievement (*see* page 662). It shows the dangers any convoy runs, ours or the enemy's, when it ventures into waters covered by an effective umbrella.

General MacArthur has warned us that Japan, in spite of losses, can still concentrate a formidable armada, and that her air force especially should not be under-estimated.

It is satisfactory, however, that in the Pacific for a long time there have been no reverses to offset successes achieved.

threat to Moscow, which at all times tied down a considerable Russian reserve army.

In their withdrawal from the salient the Germans have had heavy losses of men and material, but have escaped disastrous defeat. Thaw will probably soon bring offensive operations to an end on this part of the front, but a lull in the fighting might be an advantage to the Russians, enabling them to restore railway communication in the recaptured area and to carry out such regrouping of their armies as may be necessitated by events in the south.

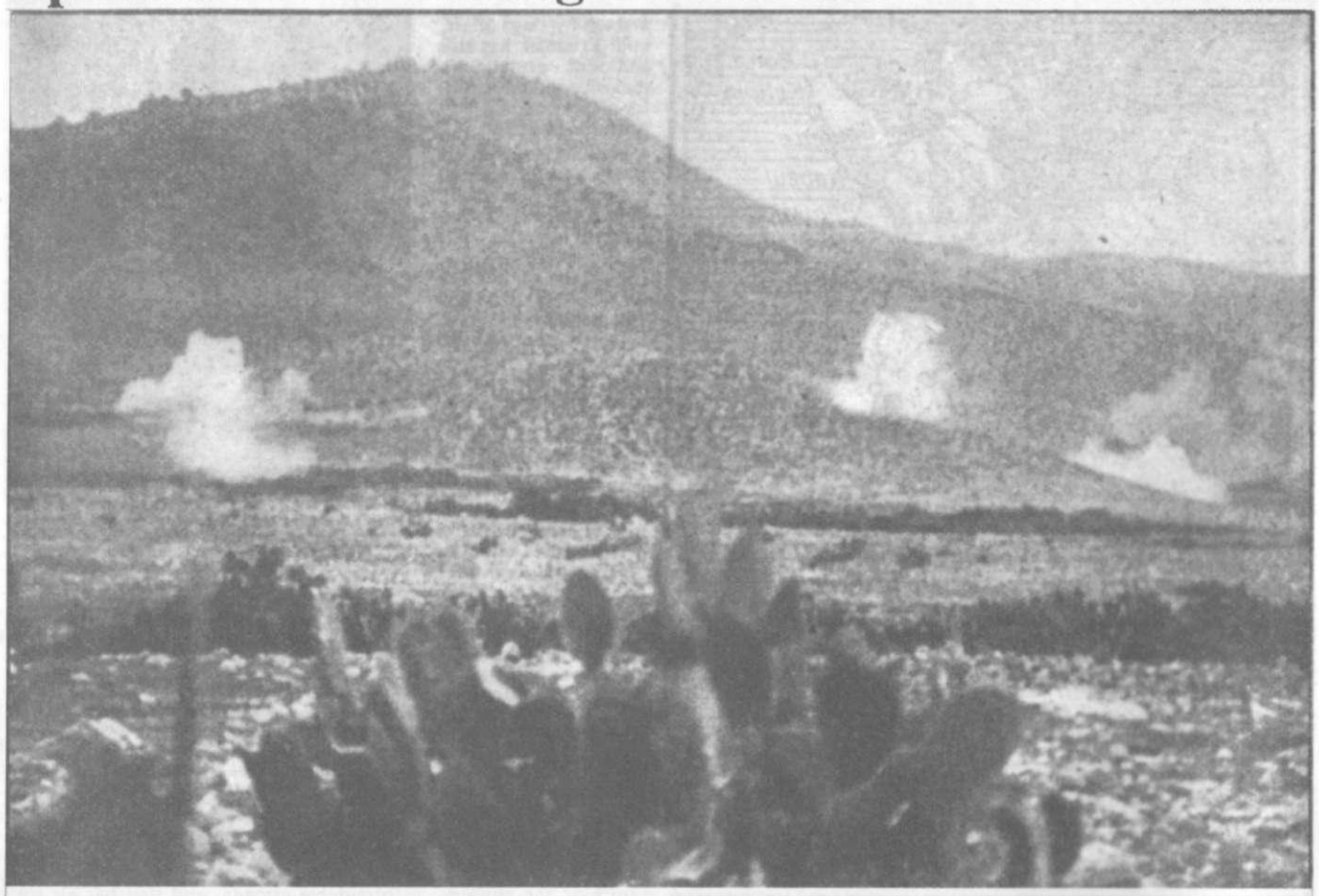
TUNISIA As I expected, Rommel withdrew, except at Gafsa, from the ground captured in his attack on the Americans and has re-established his flank screen in its original position. It was obvious that he would be compelled to use the bulk of his armour to meet the threat of the 8th Army. Characteristically he used it offensively, though probably with the object of gaining time by upsetting Montgomery's preparations rather than in the hopes of achieving any decisive success.

Once again he failed completely to catch Montgomery on the wrong foot, and suffered heavy casualties both in armour and, what may prove more important, in his picked infantry. The 8th Army's casualties, on the other hand, were light; and it is improbable that Montgomery's preparations have been delayed at all by the encounter. His counter-attacks were, however, purely of a local character, and the main battle remains to be fought.

The manner in which Rommel's attack was met should give us confidence in the result of this battle, though obviously no

ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THALA, beyond the Kasserine Pass, the enemy made one of his most determined onslaughts. Two companies of Grenadier Guards crossed 10 miles of mountainous country in 5½ hours to engage the 21st Panzer Division. But the latter, owing to the heavy losses they had incurred, had already beaten a retreat. Here are shown some of the Grenadiers with their Bren carriers. *Photo British Official*

Up and Back Through Kasserine Went Rommel



THE KASSERINE PASS in Central Tunisia was the scene at the end of February 1943 of a German thrust against the Americans, followed by a swift withdrawal towards Feriana and Sbeitla as Gen. Anderson delivered a counter-stroke. Top, German positions under fire from Allied 25-pounder guns; Axis troops were also heavily bombed during their flight. The Thala-Kasserine road was mined by the retreating enemy, and our armoured vehicles used cross-country routes as we advanced towards Kasserine itself. Meanwhile, Royal Engineers cleared the road; below, men of an R.E. Field Company probing the highway for mines with bayonets.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright

British and U.S. Tanks Defeat an Enemy Thrust

MOVING UP TO KASSERINE, Sherman tanks (top) advance along a road in support of Allied infantry and an armoured force which cleared out the enemy from the Pass. On March 1, 1943 it was announced that both Kasserine and Feriana had been reoccupied by the Allies. Inset, German Mark III tank knocked out after a two-day battle. Churchill tanks (see p. 257) have played a vital role in the Tunisian fighting. In Feb. 1943 these tanks followed up our success on the Sbiba-Sbeitla front. They carried men of an R.E. Field Company (bottom) to lift mines and pave the way for a further Allied advance. See also opposite page.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright

Newspapers the Men of the 8th Army Read

How do the men in the battle line in North Africa keep abreast of the world's news—learn the rest of the history beyond that which they themselves are making? This article by LEIGH M. SCULLY gives the answer, telling as it does of newspapers, both amateur and professional, that have a wide circulation among our fighting men "out there."

As we wait eagerly for each daily, hourly scrap of news of fresh Eighth Army successes in North Africa, Eighth Army men are just as eagerly awaiting news from home. The men out there get it not only in airgraph letters, but also from home-made "newspapers" that cater for British and American Forces in the Middle East—some of these being written and printed within the range of enemy guns. There are four of these amateur news-sheets in general circulation—Gen (which is an R.A.F. slang word for information), Parade, Crusader (specially for the tank boys) and Eighth Army News, the last a proper newspaper with the most interesting story of the whole crowd.

It all began in a brown bell-tent in the desert, half hidden in a swirl of dust. They called the tent Fleet Street, and the news-sheet produced was the first official Eighth Army news-sheet. This news-sheet came about when the Army commander wanted a summary of the B.B.C. news brought to him every morning, this being done by the Information and Publicity Officers in the field. The single copy grew to several. An ancient duplicator was acquired, and the publication of local news from the battle front followed.

GRADUALLY the "premises" have grown. Here a tent replacement, there a lorry office. Maximum production was rushed on to the roads and into the battle areas by clerks in an old 8-cwt. Dodge, newsboys of the Eighth Army. Further progress in the news-sheet's life was the arrival of the Field Publicity Unit. The first printed issue of the Eighth Army News appeared in June 1942 in the middle of battle, the very time when it was most needed to get news to the troops.

More improvements followed. The F.P.U.'s three-tonner printing shop grew into three three-ton lorries, which, placed side by side, became one long room. There were now three presses and sixteen different types. Problems which arose when the new presses went into the desert were soon overcome; and there now exist on the spot efficient editorial offices and printing machines.

Publication of the first newspaper for Allied soldiers in North Africa is claimed by three soldiers, one of them Ivan Gore, a former News Chronicle artist. Called Allied Post, it is being printed on a small German press (possibly captured). Illustration blocks are cut with razor blades. The flags of Britain, America, and France are carried as a banner. Hasty block cutting resulted in the first number carrying the Stars and Stripes the wrong way round!

IN addition to these Forces-only papers there are several local papers, some in French, some in English, that come out into the desert with lorry convoys. Probably the most widely-read of daily newspapers is La Bourse Egyptienne, also published by the Societé Orientale de Publicite, at a half-piastre, and circulating among the French-speaking population of Cairo and Alexandria. La Bourse—La Bourse is the cry you hear most often from the yelling Egyptian newsboys. Troops who know their French—and who are more accustomed to pay 1½d. rather than 2½d. for their newspaper—prefer it for up-to-the-minute news. Then there is Images, a large-size weekly picture paper, also published in French.

Most enterprising of the Middle East publishers are Societé Orientale de Publicité, who issue their various publications from the very modern offices and well-equipped press rooms in Cairo. Egyptian Mail and Egyptian Gazette are published by them—both English-language dailies.

EGYPTIAN MAIL comes out in the mornings; news editor now is a former Sunday Dispatch man, Lt. Alan Clarke; but till recently the Mail was hard-pressed for English staff, a couple having the job of supervising the spelling and lay-out. When they were off, or particularly busy on certain matters, readers were treated to a fair number of howlers in headings and text. Egyptian Gazette was in much the same position, but, published in the evenings, it has a higher "class" reputation than the Mail. Outstanding feature in the Gazette has been the daily column "Passing By," written mainly by a red-headed American, Miss "Spencer" Brooke. Both papers cost one piastre each (2½d.), and sell mostly to troops in Cairo and Alexandria.

THEY MAKE HISTORY—AND READ IT. General Montgomery's troops eagerly scan the news as they gather round this board in the desert. Among the papers here displayed are the Egyptian Mail and Eighth Army News (see accompanying text). In Tobruk Pte. Hayworthy returned to his pre-War occupation of newspaper-selling (upper photo). His papers, announcing the fall of the town, were soon sold out.

THERE is, of course, no lack of skilled newspapermen serving out on the North African battle-fronts. Hugh Cudlipp, former editor of The Sunday Pictorial, is a War Office news officer in the Middle East, and is just recovering from an injury caused by a shell splinter received while he was on reconnaissance. Squadron-Leader G. W. Houghton has faced similar dangers as a Middle East Public Relations officer, and has just been mentioned in dispatches.

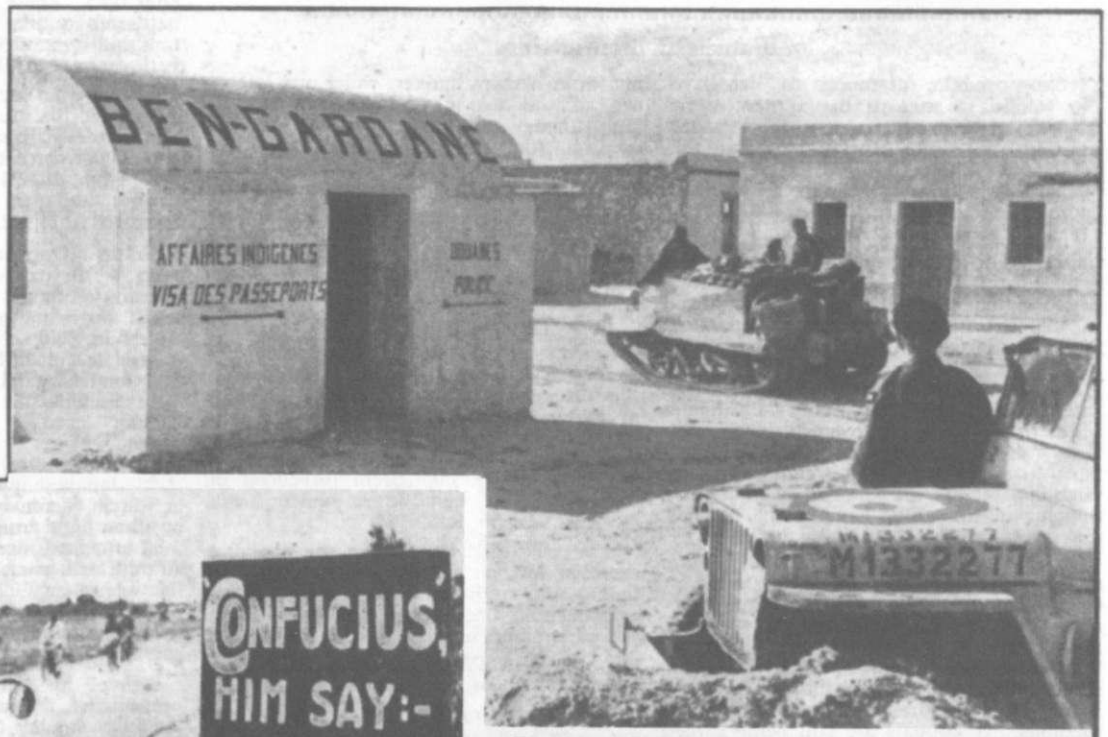
The best newspaper in the Middle East, copies of which are sent as far as Tunisia for the French and native troops, is Al-Ahram. Lads of the Eighth Army like it for the war pictures. Unfortunately they can't understand anything else in it, for it is printed in Arabic, reading right to left, so that even the positions and appearances of the pictures seem strange to our eyes.

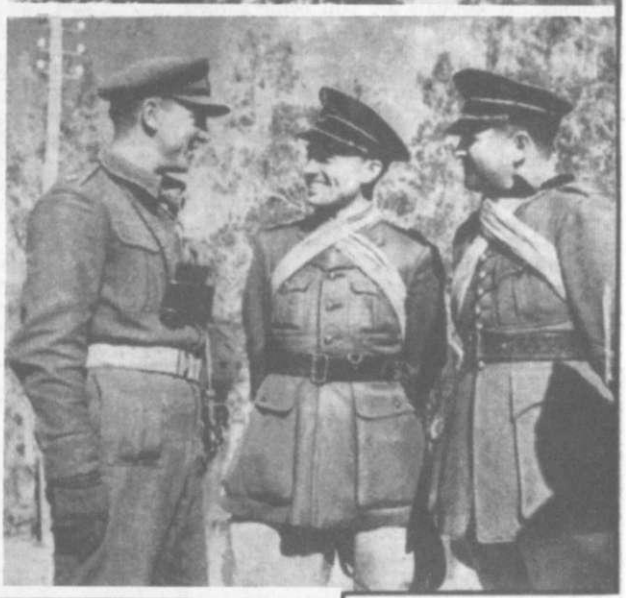
Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright

Calm before Storm along the Mareth Line

BEN-GARDANE, situated some twenty miles inside the Tunisian frontier from Tripolitania, was one of the Eighth Army's most important captures in the new war zone. In order to reach it they had to traverse a flooded area of marshland known as "the Causeway" (see p. 641), and in addition to contend with growing enemy resistance.

Right, a Bren-carrier of Gen. Montgomery's Army entering the centre of the town. Below, the driver of an Army lorry takes heed of this warning sign on the coastal road W. of Tripoli. Based on the once-popular "Confucius" joke, it indicates that care must be exercised in negotiating this road.





OFF FOR A DESERT 'JOY RIDE.' This strange-looking enemy vehicle (left) was one of the largest captured during the recent heavy fighting in the N. African theatre of war. It is a Mercedes-Benz, and was probably used by the Germans as a troop-transporter. Its caterpillar-wheels render it specially suitable for desert warfare. A party of Allied troops is here shown "going for a ride" across the sandy wastes.

When the Germans abandoned Ben-Gardane these two French gendarmes were left behind in the town to welcome the advancing British troops (above). They are seen amicably discussing an obviously absorbing topic with 2nd Lt. J. R. Probert, of the Royal Artillery.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright

THE WAR AT SEA

by Francis E. McMurtrie

SUNDRY public utterances of late have tended to suggest that a new means of locating submarines under water has been put into operation. That the number of U-boats destroyed in the last few weeks has shown a welcome increase naturally encourages this belief.

Until a definite official statement on the subject is forthcoming too much should not be built on the above possibility. It is true, of course, that radio-location can be employed for the detection of submarines operating on the surface; but water has been found impervious to this method. If indeed U-boats can now be detected more easily beneath the surface, it is more likely that it is due to a further improvement of the well-tried "asdic" system, which the Royal Navy had developed to a high degree of reliability before the present war began; though, on the other hand, some entirely new invention may have been perfected.

One thing is certain: there has been a considerable increase in the number of escort vessels, comprising destroyers, sloops, corvettes, and the larger editions of the last-named, which are now to be known as frigates (see illus. page 651). There are also more officers than there have ever been before with experience in anti-submarine methods. If U-boats are still being turned out faster than they are being destroyed, the same cannot be said of the personnel which will be required to man them. In this respect, therefore, those engaged in hunting submarines have a decided advantage.

In the week ended March 13, 1943 there were several encounters between our light forces and enemy coastal convoys in the Channel and North Sea. In one of these our forces under Lieut. J. S. Price, R.N.V.R., succeeded in sinking a German motor torpedo-boat, the loss of which was afterwards admitted by Berlin. In the second engagement our forces under Lieut. K. Gemmell, R.N.V.R., scored two torpedo hits on an enemy tanker, which was set on fire, as was one of the escorting vessels. Unfortunately we lost a vessel on this occasion, the enemy reporting that survivors had been picked up and made prisoners. This action was fought off the Dutch coast.

Next it was the turn of light forces manned by the Fighting French, under Capitaine de Corvette Muerville. Off the coast of Brittany an escorted convoy was sighted and attacked by these forces, a small supply ship being hit by a torpedo.

In spite of all this activity, the enemy attempted to pass a medium-sized supply ship through the Strait of Dover on the night of March 11–12. Intercepted by our light forces under Lieut. B. C. Ward, R.N., this vessel was torpedoed. In the following week two large supply ships were torpedoed off Terschelling by light forces under Lieut. D. G. H. Wright, R.N.V.R.

It is clear that, in spite of the vigilance exercised by our patrols, the Germans are finding the strain on their railways so intolerable that they are obliged to take the risk of sending supplies by sea.

AMERICA'S Vast Increases in Ships and Naval Planes

Some interesting facts and figures concerning American warship construction were recently revealed by Col. Frank Knox, United States Navy Secretary (equivalent to our First Lord of the Admiralty). By 1945 it is hoped that the great majority of the new warships ordered during the past two years, totalling 5,675,000 tons, will have been completed. The number of private shipyards building vessels for the U.S. Navy is now 293, as compared with 108 a year earlier. Equally impressive is the output of new aircraft, of which the Navy's complement was increased last year from 15,000 to 27,500. Manufacture of guns and other weapons is keeping pace with these rapid developments. Only certain "large units, upon which work has been suspended, due to material shortage and the length of time required to build," will be left outstanding after 1945. These are doubtless the five giant battleships of the Montana class, of 58,000 tons, and some if not all of the six 27,000-ton battle cruisers of the Alaska class.

To man the increased number of aircraft authorized, the number of U.S. Navy pilots was increased from 4,525 on June 30, 1941, to 11,240 a year later. Naval reserve aviators rose from 19,824 to 69,811 in the same period; and men with aeronautical ratings increased from 12,432 to 31,106.

Colonel Knox also disclosed that a new type of destroyer, of about 1,300 tons, specially designed for transatlantic convoy work, was being produced in large numbers, exceeding 200. "Several score" of these vessels, he stated, had already been launched. It is understood that in their main features they resemble the later units of the British "Hunt" class.

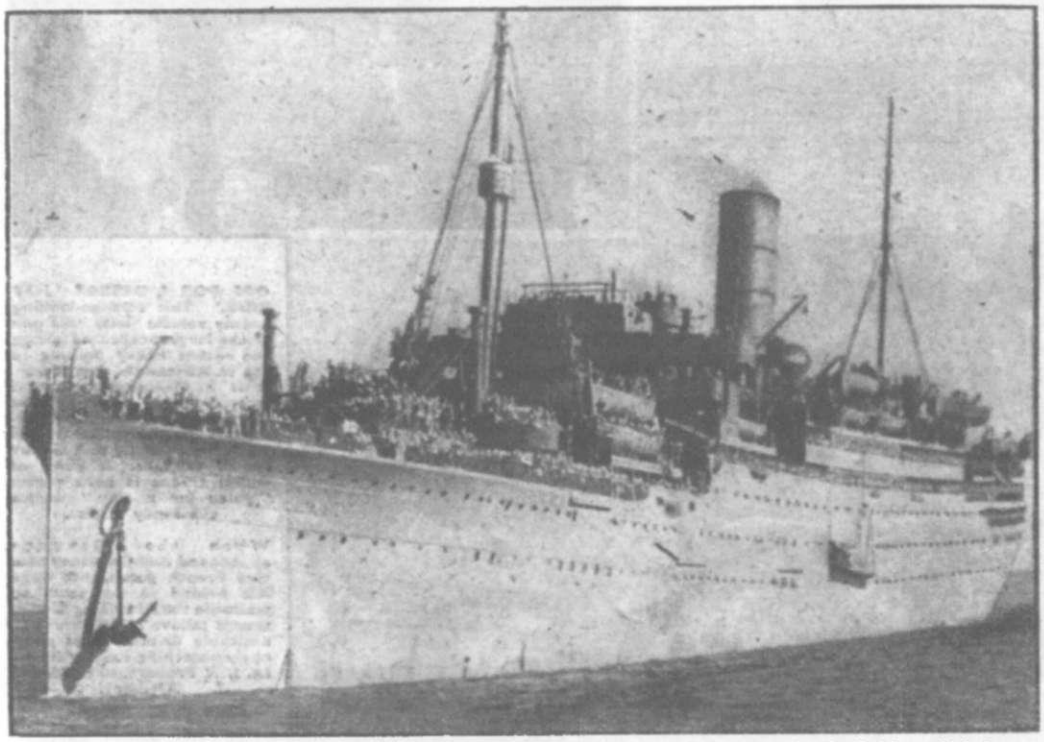
A HEAVY blow was struck against the Japanese in the New Guinea area early in March. A convoy of 12 transports, escorted by three light cruisers and seven destroyers, was attacked again and again by Allied aircraft as it passed through the Vitiaz Strait (between New Guinea and the island of New Britain) and entered the Huon Gulf. It was carrying reinforcements for the Japanese garrison of Lae.

Sighted by Allied reconnaissance planes on March 1, the convoy was first attacked on the following day, four transports being sunk. During March 3 further attacks were made, destroying all but two destroyers, which were tracked down on the third day and sent to the bottom. Barges, lifeboats and rafts with survivors were also accounted for, so that not a single Japanese soldier is believed to have reached the convoy's destination. A few who landed on adjacent islands were killed or made prisoners. (*See* also page 662.)

This success is the more striking, since a strong air escort had been provided by the enemy. At least 59 enemy aircraft were brought down, and many more seriously damaged, in the course of the three days' operations. Allied losses amounted to one bomber and three fighters, convincing proof of the superior quality of our planes and pilots. More than 100 bombs were dropped on the convoy during one 24-hour period. American Mitchell bombers alone used 17,000 rounds of ammunition in firing on the enemy ships as they passed low over them. The attack was opened by R.A.A.F. Havocs, which scored 12 hits on six transports, most of them ships of about 6,000 tons gross. A Mitchell scored a direct hit on a 5,000-ton transport, which burst into flames and foundered a few minutes later.

THROUGHOUT the operations a strong force of Lightning fighters guarded our bombers. These were challenged by Japanese Zero fighters, but defeated them with heavy loss. Intense anti-aircraft fire was also encountered from the escorting enemy warships.

This highly satisfactory action shows very clearly that the Japanese failed to appreciate at its true value the lesson of Crete, nearly two years ago. In the Axis attack on that island our forces had practically no air cover, with the result that four British cruisers and six destroyers were sunk and many others damaged.



NORTH AFRICAN TRANSPORT, her decks crowded with troops—one of the many hundred ships which have carried men and supplies to the N. African ports since the Allied landings in Morocco and Algeria last November. Tanks are among the most important of the war material carried, the results of which have recently been seen in the vigorous fighting in Tunisia. *Photo, British Newsreel*

Home from the Sea After a Year of Victories

H.M. SUBMARINE UMBRA recently returned to home waters after twelve adventurous months in the Mediterranean with 16 victories marked upon her skull-and-crossbones flag. The crew, under the command of Lt. S. L. C. Maydon, D.S.O., R.N., had many exciting stories to tell of their experiences. On one occasion they believe that the explosion caused by one of their torpedoes hitting an enemy supply ship was so great that it destroyed an escort plane diving above the blazing vessel.

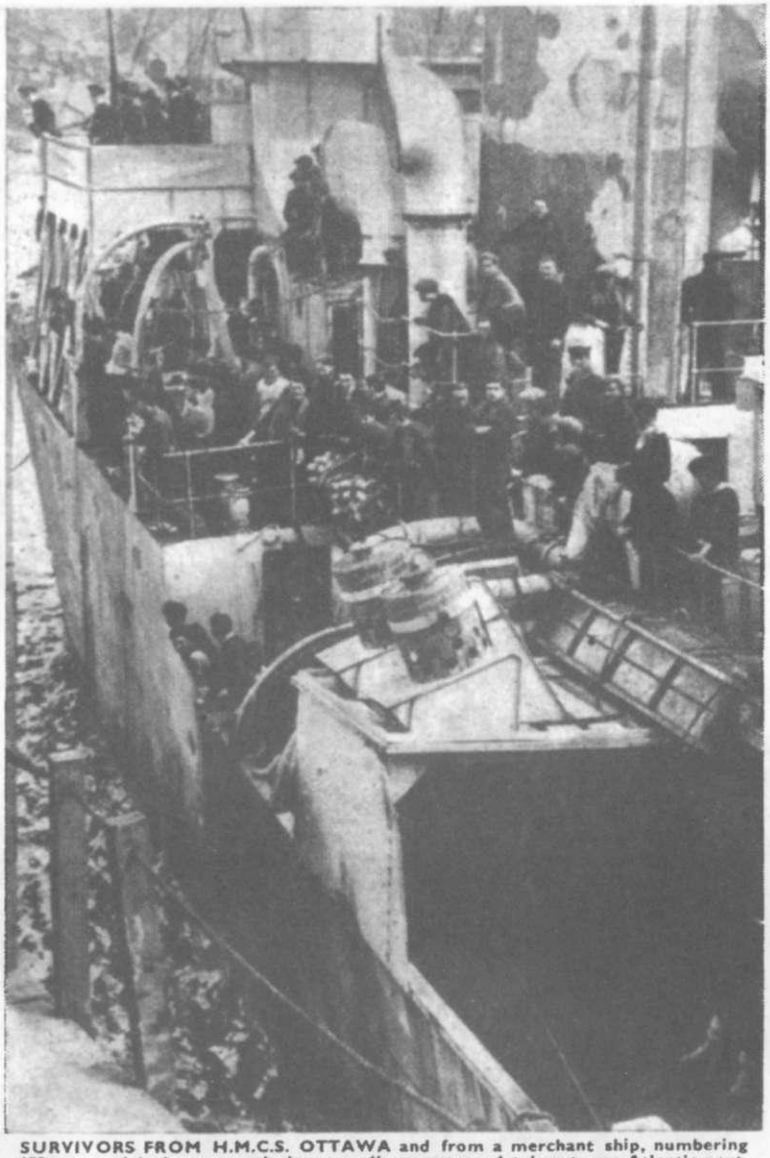
Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

Brave Men of the Royal Navy: Some New Awards

Cdr. J. M. HODGES, awarded the D.S.O. for displaying outstanding bravery during our operations in Madagascar last year. He is the son of Admiral Hodges.

Lt.-Cdr. H. HAGGARD, awarded the D.S.O. and D.S.C. for his gallant submarine actions in the Indian Ocean, Mediterranean, etc. He commanded the Truant.

Lt. D. COPPERWHEAT, awarded the G.C. An officer in H.M.S. Penelope, he scuttled a burning ammunition ship in Valetta harbour during a heavy raid.



SURVIVORS FROM H.M.C.S. OTTAWA and from a merchant ship, numbering 150, were picked up recently by a small corvette and taken to an Atlantic port. The Ottawa had rescued survivors from the merchant vessel when she was herself torpedoed. The corvette is here shown in port.

Lt. H. S. MACKENZIE, commander of H.M. submarine Thrasher, awarded a Bar to his D.S.O. for his daring exploits in raiding Axis supplies in the Mediterranean.

Art. R. E. MERRITT, awarded the D.S.M. on his return home after 2½ years' voyage in the Truant. His award was gazetted in Sept. 1940 for bravery in Norway.

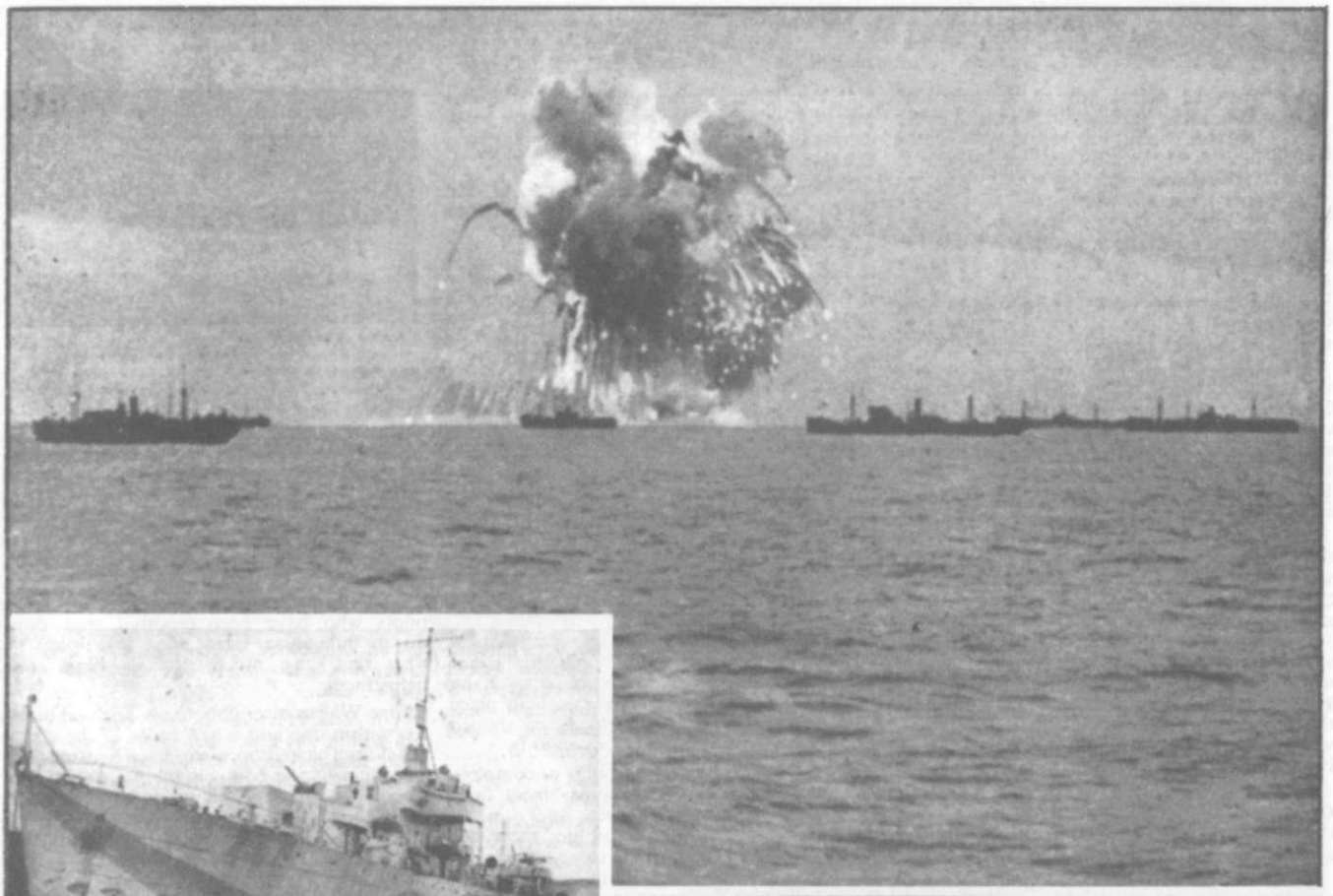
Lt. W. TOMLINSON, awarded the D.S.C. for heroism. Commander of a motor-gunboat, he fought his ship through severe enemy air attacks in the Channel.

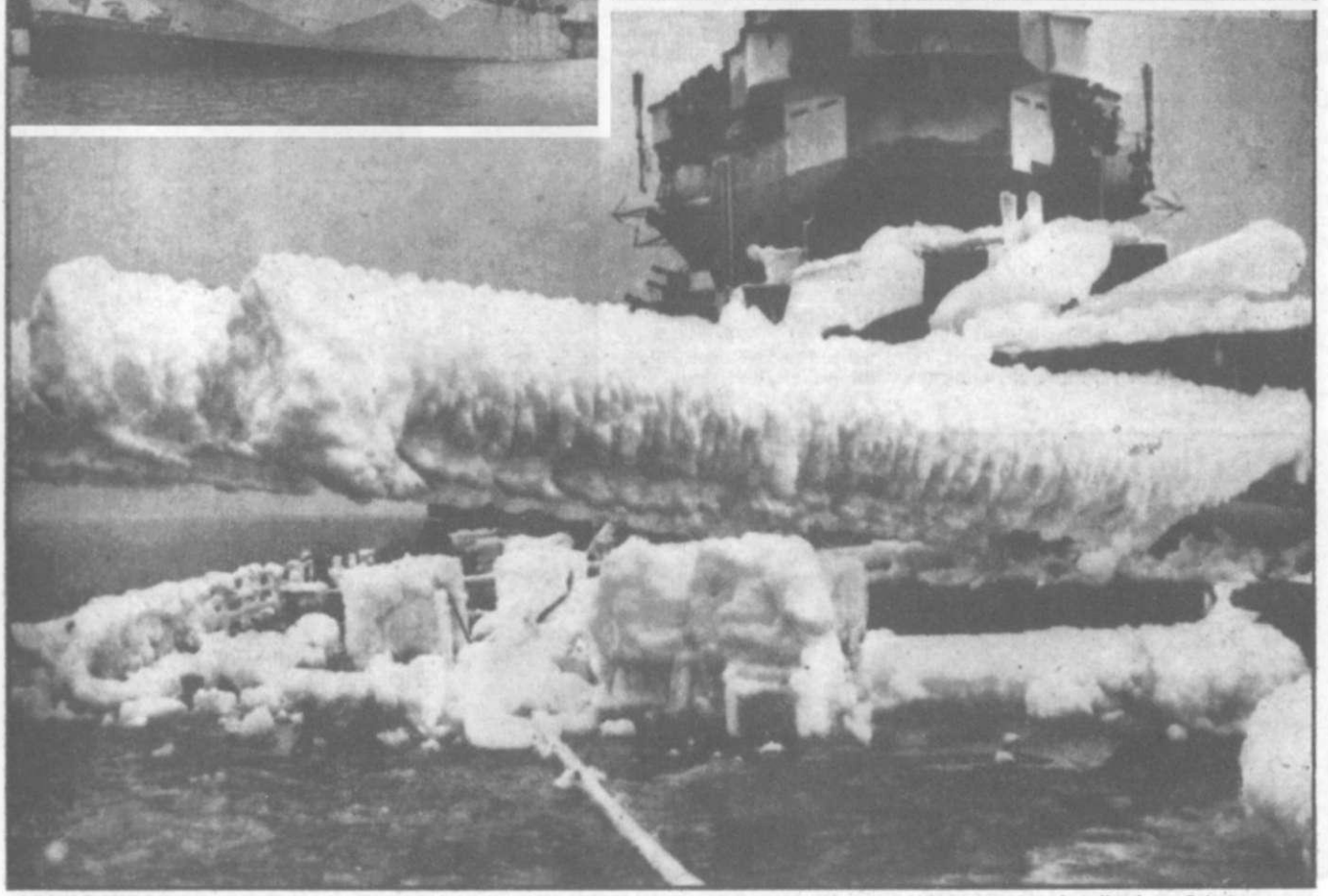
C. P O. SAVAGE, awarded the D.S.M. and Bar. With him is Boy ROY DE MOUILPIED, awarded the D.S.M. Their ship, H.M.S. Penelope, was heavily bombed at Malta, and Mouilpied helped Savage throughout the gallant vessel's fourteen-day ordeal (see pages 22, 60).

Lt. R. H. MARRION (left) of H.M. minesweeper Fezenta, and Lt. R. H. PRATT, of H.M. minesweeper Welsbach, each awarded the D.S.C. They have been three years in minesweepers and are now group captains. They are so alike that they are often mistaken for each other.

Photos, Keystone, Fox, New York Times Photos, Planet News, Associated Press, L.N.A., News Chronicle, Central Press

Not Foe Nor Weather Stay the Ships for Russia





CONVOYS TO MURMANSK continue to get through despite Arctic conditions, severe bomber and U-boat attacks. Supplies from Britain to our Ally between October 1941 and December 1942 included 2,974 tanks and over 3,000 aircraft. Top, the enemy scores a hit on an ammunition ship; three of the attacking enemy aircraft were blown to pieces by the explosion. Left centre, H.M.S. Rother, one of Britain's frigates—a revival of a time-honoured description for a new type of swifter and heavier corvette. 3, Ice-encrusted heavy guns of a battleship operating in northern waters, before being prepared for action.

Photos, British Official; New York Times Photos

Always Ready to Save Is the 'Salvation Navy'

A band of brothers who find their work—and their happiness—in saving the lives of others: such is the Air-Sea Rescue Service whose work JOHN ALLEN GRAYDON describes in this article. Illustrations of the German rescue float will be found in Vol. 4, p. 134.

At scattered points around the coasts of Britain, at Malta, Gibraltar, and other parts of the Empire, in fair weather and foul, launches of the Air-Sea Rescue Service are always manned and ready to put to sea and rescue from a watery grave any fighter pilot, or bomber crew, forced to bale out when over the sea. For obvious reasons the number of pilots rescued by the "Salvation Navy" (as it is called) cannot be revealed, but many hundreds of men have lived to fight another day because of the gallantry and daring of the crews aboard the launches.

Measuring 63 ft. and capable of speeds well over forty-five miles an hour, the Air-Sea Rescue launches, which work in close cooperation with the Royal Navy, are, because of the increasing number of Fighter Command sweeps and attacks by aircraft of Bomber Command, busier than ever before in their history.

A short time ago I went out into the Channel aboard one of these launches. As we sped into mid-Channel hundreds of Spitfires and Hurricanes roared overhead, acting as escort to squadrons of Bostons and Havocs which were about to attack docks and stores on the French coast. When we were within two and three-quarter miles of the French coast, and our bombers dropped their loads, our launch "lifted" out of the water, so powerful were the explosives cased in our bombs!

Then a "dog-fight" between British and German fighters developed overhead, and the men aboard the launch prepared for action. We did not have long to wait.

After several of the German machines had turned towards base, smoke pouring from their tails, one of the Spitfires was seen to be in difficulties.

Our skipper turned towards the machine—not a moment too soon. Within a few seconds we knew the pilot had baled out, his white parachute standing out against the sky. Slowly he floated seawards, while comrades circled round to make sure that no over-anxious Huns attempted a little shooting practice.

Hardly had the man touched the water and was inflating his rubber dinghy (*see* illus. Vol 5, p. 71), when we were on the spot; and, but a minute or so after he had entered the sea, that pilot was safe aboard our launch, drinking hot rum and changing into warm clothes.

"You fellows sure work fast," the airman, a young Toronto pilot, formerly a bank clerk and product of the Empire Air Training Scheme, grinned.

"So do you," I replied, for the Air-Sea Rescue ratings were too busy to engage in conversation. "That was pretty smart the way you inflated your dinghy. Been forced to bale out before?"

"No," answered the Canadian, "but I reckon the training we have before taking the air, when we are taught in a special lake at training-school how to inflate our rubber boat under realistic circumstances, has saved many lives. It did just now, for I'm not a hot swimmer!"

In the early days of the War the Air-Sea Rescue Service did good work, especially off Dover; but it was not organized into the great body it is today. With the growth of the Royal Air Force, so has the "Salvation Navy" developed its own strength and called upon science to aid its brave men in the saving of life.

Around the coasts of Britain, for example, are special rescue floats. Painted bright yellow and red, they are moored at many points over which aerial combats take place with fair regularity. These floats are shaped like a boat and measure just over 30 ft.

Aboard them the pilot finds a complete change of clothing, preserved meat and vegetables, drinking water, tea, and rum. In addition to the necessities of life, there are clean towels, soap, a primus stove, and, most important of all, a signalling apparatus by means of which the marooned man can contact base and inform them of his position and the number of his float. By checking on their chart, the Air-Sea Rescue officers can immediately make for the float on which the pilot is stranded.

In the early days of the Service, despite the thoroughness of searchers, pilots were often missed by launches and aircraft sent to locate them. Scientists, however, commenced work, and developed yellow life-jackets and skull-caps, which when worn by the crews are visible from the air and for a considerable distance on the sea. Smoke signals, too, have been developed. The smoke, which is of an orange colour, can be seen for over thirty miles, and I have seen no fewer than six pilots saved by this method. Fluorescine is also used to colour the sea a yellowish green, and men who pilot the Lysander and Walrus aircraft engaged in the hunts for pilots who have been reported shot down or in difficulties over the sea told me that this, as much as anything else, helps them.

NEW AIR-SEA RESCUE SERVICE BADGE shows a high-speed launch in white against a background of R.A.F. blue. It is worn on the right arm. *Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright*

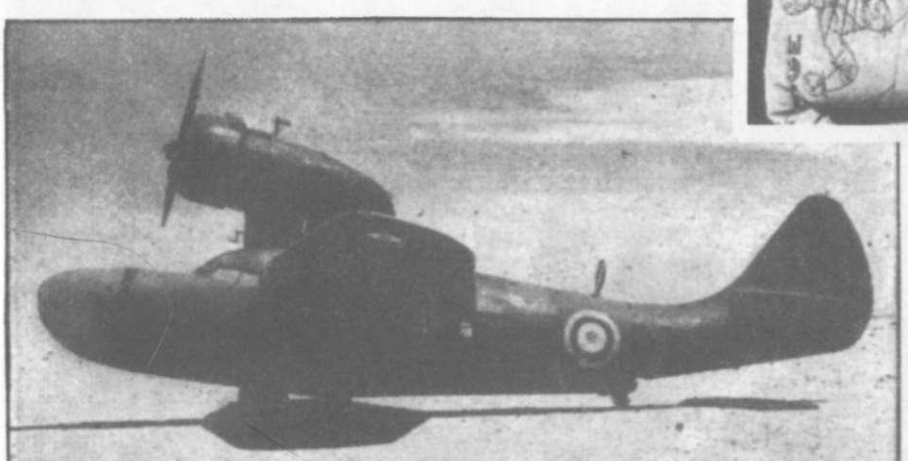
One Walrus aircraft actually alighted on the sea within one and a half miles of the enemy coast and picked up a stranded Spitfire pilot. The man at the controls of the Walrus then discovered that the plane was in the centre of an enemy minefield! By making his flying-boat "jump" over several mines the Air-Sea Rescue man managed to evade the enemy—and yet another well-trained pilot was taken back to the English shore to fight again another day.

At Malta one of the launches attached to the A.-S.R.S. based on the George Cross Island has saved nearly 70 airmen who have been forced to bale out over the sea in the course of the fierce air engagements that have taken place in this area.

The Germans used to pay respect to these launches of the "Salvation Navy," but since they have saved so many airmen's lives the Nazi has shown his true nature. Even when our men have been aiding shot-down German pilots, fighters of the Luftwaffe have swept over and machine-gunned friend and foe. At times our losses in launches and men have been heavy. Now the launches are mounted with guns—but the men aboard never use them until they are attacked. Unfortunately, they rarely get a chance of hitting back once the Hun, for no reason at all, has swept them with his cannons.

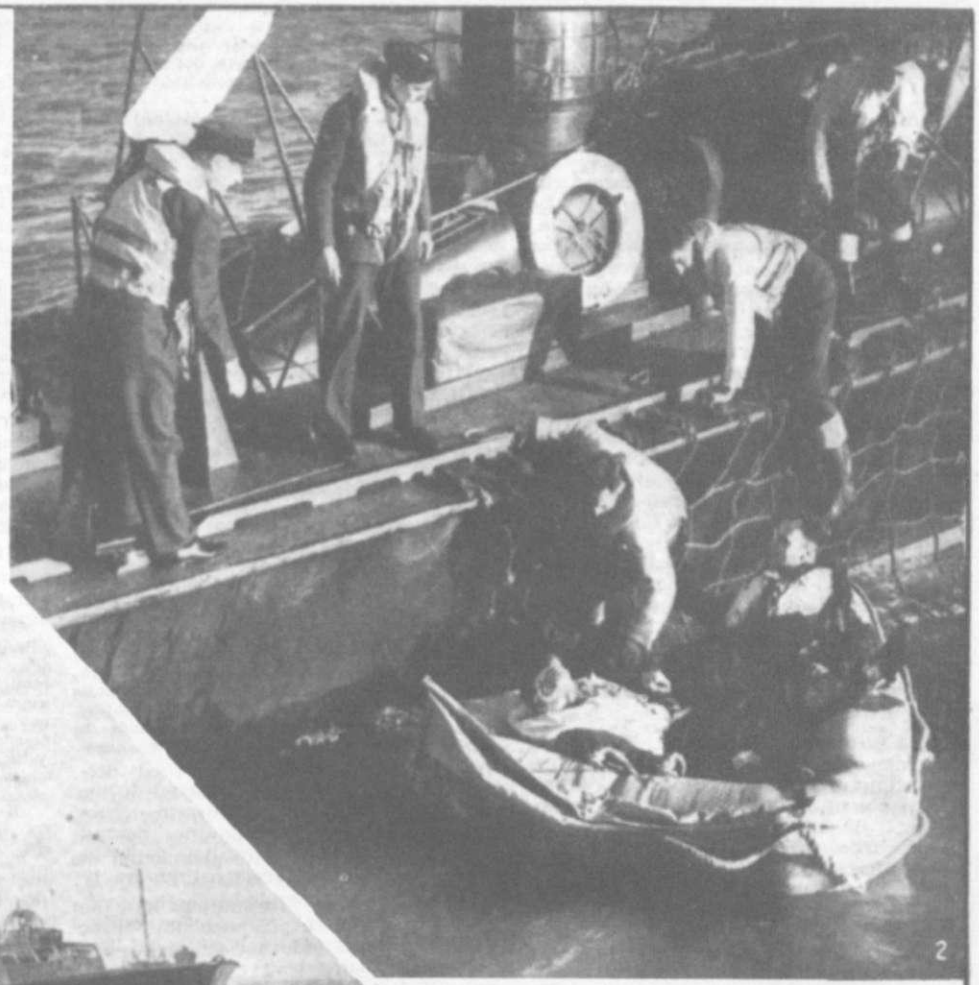
Despite this constantly-used method of "terror attack," the "Salvation Navy" continues to go about its work. And, as an appreciation of its personnel's great deeds over the past three years, the Air Ministry have awarded it a badge which will be worn on the right arm.

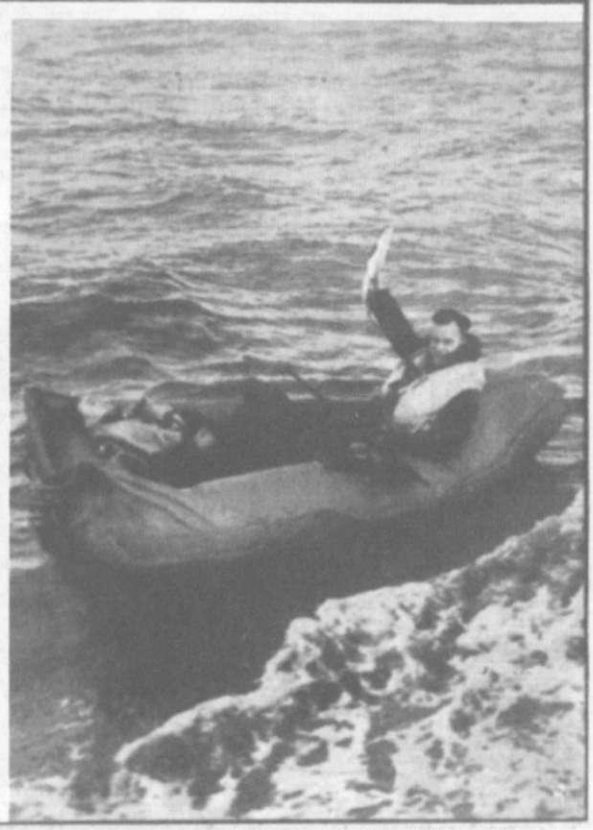
No Service, in its own quiet manner, has performed a more valuable role than the Air-Sea Rescue Service. A band of brothers who find their happiness in saving the lives of others.



U.S. FAIRCHILD AMPHIBIAN AIRCRAFT in the Western Desert, a type of machine extensively used by the Middle East Air-Sea Rescue Service. Inset, Spitfire pilot rescued off Mersa Brega (Gulf of Sirte) by one of these planes after baling out at 3,000 ft. Owing to an injured arm he was unable to paddle his dinghy and would probably have perished but for the "Salvation Navy." *Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright*

Their Motto: 'The Sea Shall Not Have Them'





THE AIR-SEA RESCUE SERVICE has saved the lives of many airmen forced down round our coasts. 1, Sq. Ldr. R. F. Hamlyn, A.F.C., D.F.M., in command of an Air-Sea Rescue Squadron in the South of England. A veteran of the Battle of Britain, he has destroyed 13 enemy aircraft, 5 of them in one day. 2, Exhausted airmen come alongside the rescue launch in their dinghy. 3, This launch races to pick up airmen marooned in the North Sea. 4, British pilot signals to an A-S.R.S. crew from his dinghy. These compact little rubber boats are coloured yellow to make them more easily distinguishable at a distance.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright; Planet News

Bomber Command's Hammer-blows on Germany

Introducing the Air Estimates on March 11, 1943, Sir Archibald Sinclair, Secretary of State for Air, gave the House of Commons a most encouraging report. After announcing the establishment of an R.A.F. Transport Command, and reviewing the work of Army Cooperation, Fighter and Coastal Commands and the R.A.F. in North Africa, he came to Bomber Command's offensive against Germany. It is on this part of his speech that the following article is chiefly based.

BOMBS on Germany! They are falling by day, they are falling by night, hundreds of tons at a time. At long last the German people are coming to learn what modern war really means. When it was London or Bristol, Coventry or Plymouth, that were getting the bombs, they were not at all concerned—many of them, indeed, openly gloated. But bombs on Munich, bombs on Nuremberg, Stuttgart, Cologne, Düsseldorf, Bremen and Hamburg, Essen, Berlin itself—that's a very different matter. The Nazis boasted of the destruction Goering's young airmen wreaked on Rotterdam and Belgrade, but now their newspapers are filled with moans about "British barbarism." Particularly hysterical were they when Nuremberg and Munich—"those unholy cities of the Nazi cult," Sir Archibald Sinclair called them in his speech in the House of Commons on March 11—were hit hard early in March. The Germans lyingly declared that the damage was confined to historic monuments, to medieval relics, to churches and museums: "the enemies of Europe and of European civilization, culture and art," said the Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, "are destroying systematically the most venerable monuments in Germany and Italy."

Such plaints do not ring true. No one on this side of the war will rejoice over the destruction of any part of Europe's cultural inheritance, of the little homes of the German people. But the Nazi Brown House at Munich (reported to have been damaged) is no monument of culture; and where military objectives are found in the midst of populous cities they can hardly be spared. In the debate following Sir Archibald Sinclair's speech Mr. R. R. Stokes protested "in the name of humanity" against what he described as our "merciless destruction of women and children." But it must be remembered, indeed it will never be forgotten, that it was the Nazis who initiated this savagery. Now they are reaping what they have sown. And verily they who sowed the wind are reaping the whirlwind.

In spite of bad weather, said Sir Archibald Sinclair on March 11, the tonnage of bombs dropped in January this year was only surpassed three times in 1942. In February with a delivery of over 10,000 tons of bombs, including three 1,000-ton raids, Bomber Command dropped more than half as much again as in any previous month. In the first 10 days of March more than 4,000 tons of bombs had been dropped. It was evident, Sir Archibald went on, from photographs taken following the attack on Essen on the night of March 5–6, that the German war industry had suffered in this raid its heaviest blow from our bomber offensive.

In the Krupps Works 13 main buildings had been destroyed or severely damaged and damage could be seen in at least 40 other factory buildings, sheds and workshops. The majority of those were in the steel works and included heavy damage to such key sections as furnaces, foundry and forges. In all, the severe damage to workshops and administrative buildings covered 136,000 square yards. There was a direct hit on the Essen power station, while damage to the gas works extended over an area of 3½ acres. Immediately to the east of the Krupps Works there was a total destruction of a built-up area of 160 acres, and it was estimated that there was a total of 450 acres where at least 75 per cent of the buildings had been demolished, or gutted. Two days after the attack fires were still burning. Some 30,000 people in Essen, most of whom were employed in the Krupps Works, had lost their houses, and many thousands in addition had been rendered temporarily homeless.

(Talking of photographs, surprised Berliners are reported to have remarked on the "incredible cheek" of a British reconnaissance plane which, following the last raid, came down so low to photograph the damage that the A.A. guns dared not fire!)

Bomber Command's operations have not been confined to Essen; elsewhere the destruction of Germany's industrial centres has been continued on a large scale.

The toll of devastation includes 118 acres in Wilhelmshaven, in Rostock 130 acres, in Mainz 135 acres, in Lübeck 200 acres, in Karlsruhe 260 acres, in Düsseldorf 380 acres, in Cologne 600 acres, together with a total of many thousands of acres of industrial property devastated in other towns.

In all, Sir Archibald calculated that Bomber Command's activities had caused the destruction of, or serious damage to, 2,000 German factories and industrial works.

Substantially more than a million people have been rendered homeless, not counting the large numbers who have been evacuated for fear of air attack, rendering towns in the eastern parts of Germany, Berlin among them, intolerably overcrowded. Direct damage to steel works in the Ruhr and Saar has caused a loss of 1¾ million tons of steel, and the total loss of steel must be much greater. The daily output of coal in the Ruhr fell by 20 per cent in three months last summer, and in the latter half of 1942 coal exports to Sweden and Italy, partly through shortage of coal, and partly through dislocation of communications, were markedly diminished. Much working time has been lost in industry through absenteeism and the dislocation of transport.

Furthermore, the Air Minister pointed out, the three main Italian targets which had been selected for attack and so severely damaged by our bombers—Milan, Turin and Genoa—embraced practically two-thirds of the total industrial production of Italy.

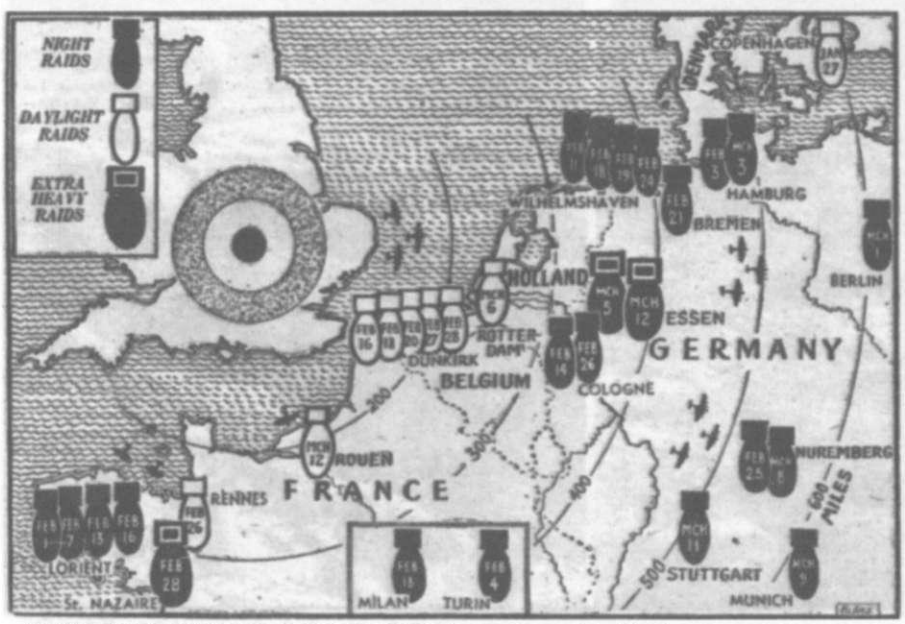
Well might Sir Archibald Sinclair pay glowing tribute to those who are carrying out these operations, hazardous but tremendously important, terrifically devastating. He concluded:

Praise the men who are striking these hammer-blows at German might—fearless young men flying through storm and cold and darkness above the height of Mont Blanc, through the flak, hunted by the night fighters, but coolly and skilfully identifying and bombing these targets. They are sustained by the knowledge of duty well done, and of high achievement, and they deserve our thanks and praise.

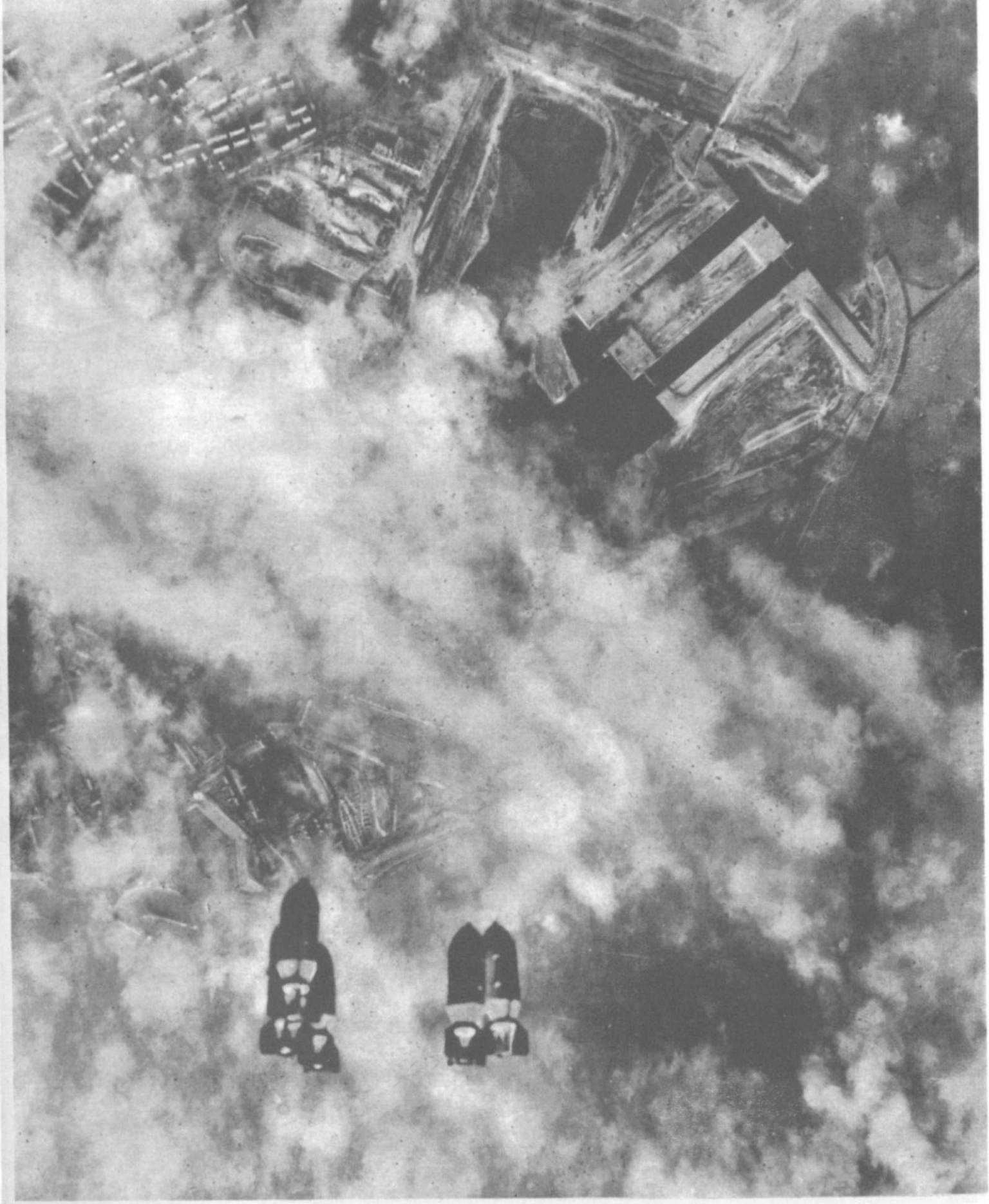
RECENTLY the Air Ministry published a survey of Bomber Command's activities during 1942. In this it is demonstrated that the trouble caused by our raids is more serious to Germany now than was Germany's air offensive against Britain two years ago, because we at that time still had plenty of fat and tremendous recuperative power. But Germany now is strained to the limit, so that a ton of bombs on Essen today is worth far more to us than was a ton of bombs on Birmingham to the enemy in 1940. The cumulative effect is even more important. One spanner in the works, such as the 1,000-bomber raid on Cologne, is not necessarily a very serious business, but a second spanner is harder to deal with than the first.

It is, however, a lengthy process to put out of action a machine as tough as the German industrial system. We know that the efficiency of German industrial production is falling, but we cannot say how much of its decline is due to bombing and how much to deficient food, foreign labour, and so on. The best method of dispelling doubts as to whether the bomber offensive is really worth while is to make a careful study of its development in 1942. During that year the total bomb-load of Bomber Command aircraft dispatched to Germany alone was 37,000 tons; what this means may be gathered from the fact that in the German attack on Coventry, on November 14, 1940, about 185 tons fell.

Finally, there is the question of morale. The German civilian, like the German soldier, is tough, and will not give up at all easily. But the Germans have been living under war conditions for much longer than we have, and they are now suffering military reverses such as they have never previously experienced. Under these handicaps the strain of repeated air raids is not easy to bear. It will take a lot to break the back of this particular camel, is the Air Ministry's conclusion. But no one who knows the facts of the bomber offensive against Germany in 1942, and considers the prospect for 1943, is likely to doubt the contribution which the British air offensive can make in the coming year.



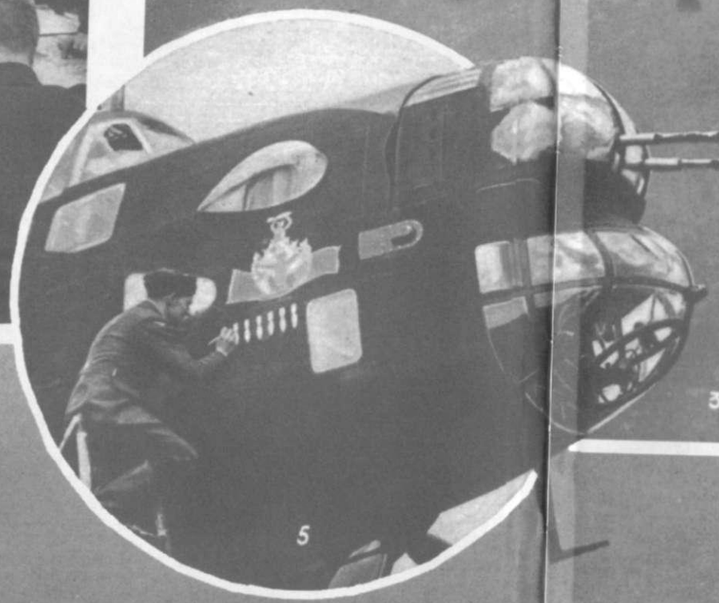
FOURTEEN THOUSAND TONS OF BOMBS were dropped by Bomber Command on enemy targets in six weeks, disclosed Sir A. Sinclair on March 11, 1943. Almost 2,000 factories, etc., have been destroyed or damaged in Germany during the whole offensive. Above are indicated the main R.A.F. raids during the period under review. *By courtesy of The Daily Express*

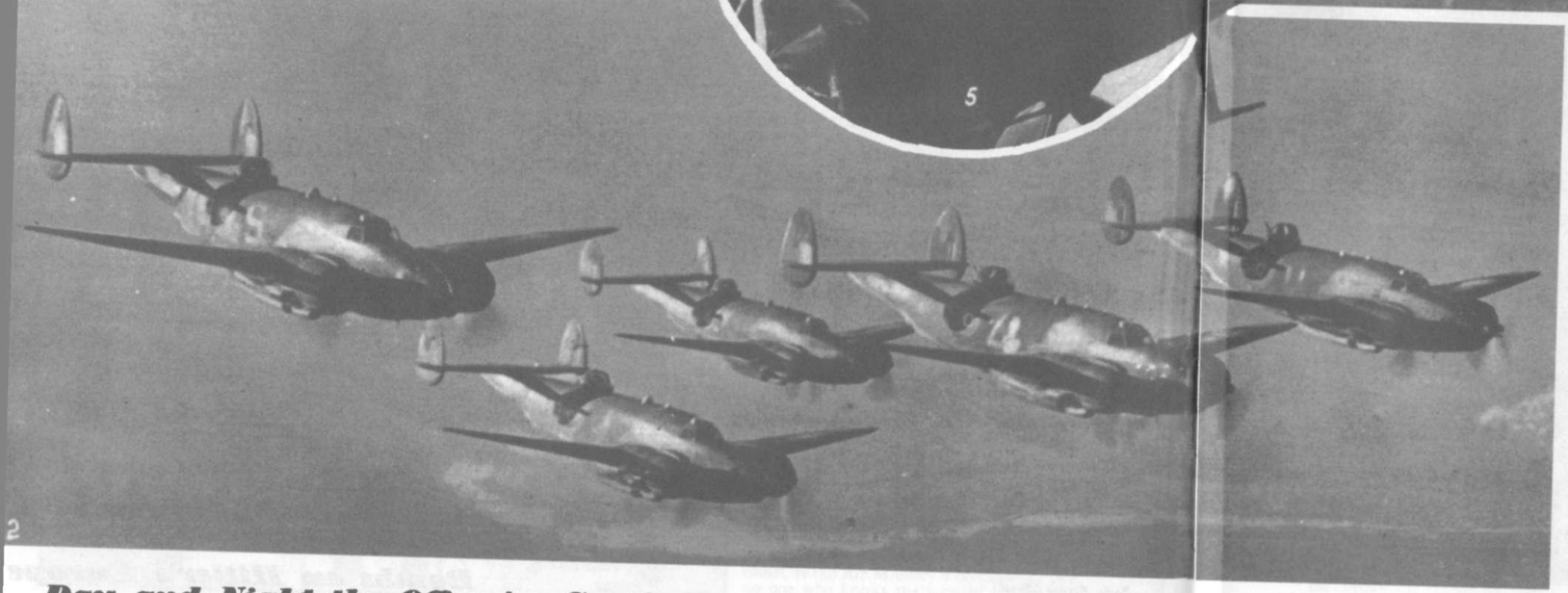


Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

Bombs on Hitler's Europe!

Week by week, day by day, night after night, the weight of the Anglo-American air onslaught on the seats of Nazi power in the West grows and grows. Among recent targets most heavily "plastered" is the great naval base at Wilhelmshaven, where the toll of devastation has grown to 118 acres, including the utter destruction of the arsenal. Bombs of the 8th U.S.A.A.F. are here seen streaking down towards the recently-opened Adolf Hitler basin, on Jan. 27 last.





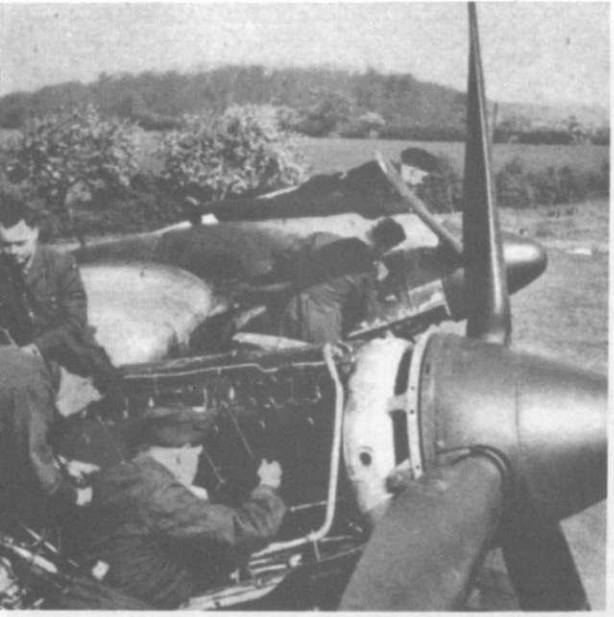
Day and Night the Offensive Continues

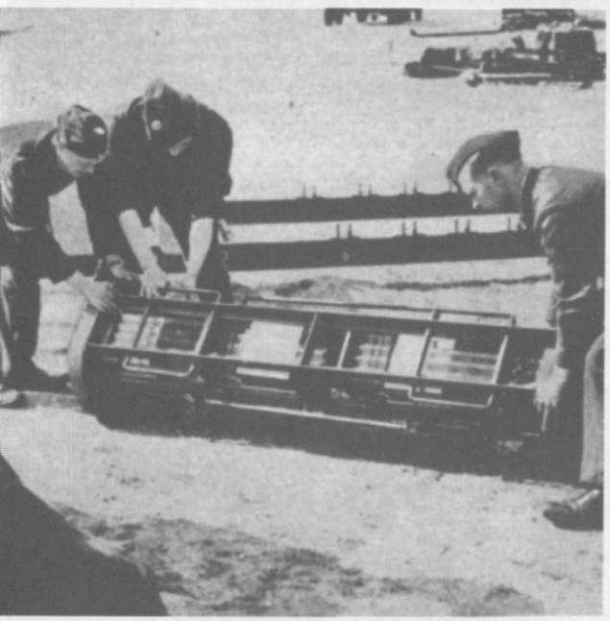
At a day bomber station the crews chosen for the next raid are being briefed (1); soon in their Douglas Boston IIIs, fastest twin-engined bomber the Americans have sent us so far, they will be blasting some bastion of "Fortress Europe." While they are away over Wilhelmshaven or Lorient the lands across the Channel will be swept methodically by our latest reconnaissance bomber (2)—the 270 m.p.h. Ventura, a product of the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation.

Photos: Topical Press, New York Times Photos, Planet News, C. E. Brown

Round the Clock in the Air War

Afternoon comes, and perchance there are Nazis in the sky, a surface ship hugging the French coast, a U-boat making for home . . . These new and even better Spitfire IXs (3) will soon put paid to their account. Night, or rather early morning; and back from the R.A.F.'s 58th raid on Berlin, the "thunderbolt" attack on March 1, there emerge from Z for Zebra, P.W/O C. S. Sanderson and his crew (4). Soon a new bomb will be painted up (5)—sign of another day's duty nobly done.





Destination Berlin?

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright; Charles E Brown, Topical Press, Fox

Before it was light this morning the giant bomber touched down at the aerodrome, safe home after a raid on some city or port of Hitler's. But tonight she's due out again, so the ground crews are hard at it. Fitters and riggers are overhauling the engines (1), the fire-bombs are made ready (2), the ammunition belts refilled (3), and bombs—Lord Beaverbrook's big beautiful bombs—brought from the magazine (4). Maybe it's the Berliners who are going to have a bad night.

UNDER THE SWASTIKA

An Englishman's Life in Pétain's France

In what follows HENRY DAVRAY writes of an old friend, an Englishman, "who loves France as much as I love Britain." This friend of his lives in France, and the story of his experiences in what until last November was Unoccupied France makes illuminating reading.

FOR the last forty years my English friend —let us call him John Taylor—has lived in France. When he first arrived in Paris he was on his way back to England after two years spent as a tutor in a noble family in Russian Poland. Paris made such an impression upon him that he never went any farther, and he was still living on the banks of the Seine when the First World War started. He decided to "stay put" and, as a large number of professors was being mobilized, he offered his services to the Ministry of Public Education and was appointed, for the duration, as teacher of English at one of the best renowned Paris lycées.

Few Parisians knew Paris as well as he did, and he had a special fondness for the old quarters, whose every house has a long history. He was equally allured by the countryside around Paris, the beautiful Ile de France with its rich fields and old market-towns. He scoured it on his old bicycle, sketching picturesque nooks, village churches and ancient manors, and making friends with the residents who invited him to stay with them at holidaytime. The parish priests specially, the curés, gave him a hearty welcome, and sheltered him as a guest in their roomy presbyteries.

About these spots in Paris and its environs he wrote a series of small books provided with maps and with a number of his own pencil-sketches. The curés became his zealous agents, displaying his elegant little volumes in literature stands in their churches, near the stoup, to tempt tourists motoring through the country.

Then my friend turned into a quiet and efficient propagandist for his own land and people, without any link or tie with officialdom. His idea was to issue a weekly paper in English for French schoolboys and schoolgirls who were learning English. He persuaded a well-known firm of publishers of schoolbooks to produce it, and thus The Briton knew an immediate success, which it enjoyed for many years until the collapse of France.

In these more recent years his sight worried him somewhat, and when he took medical advice he was told it was cataract and that an operation was becoming unavoidable. It was performed on one of his eyes, pending a second one on the other. To recuperate after that trial, he went to stay with some friends in the country east of Paris, and there he was when the Germans broke through the French defences on the Marne, and rushed down towards Paris.

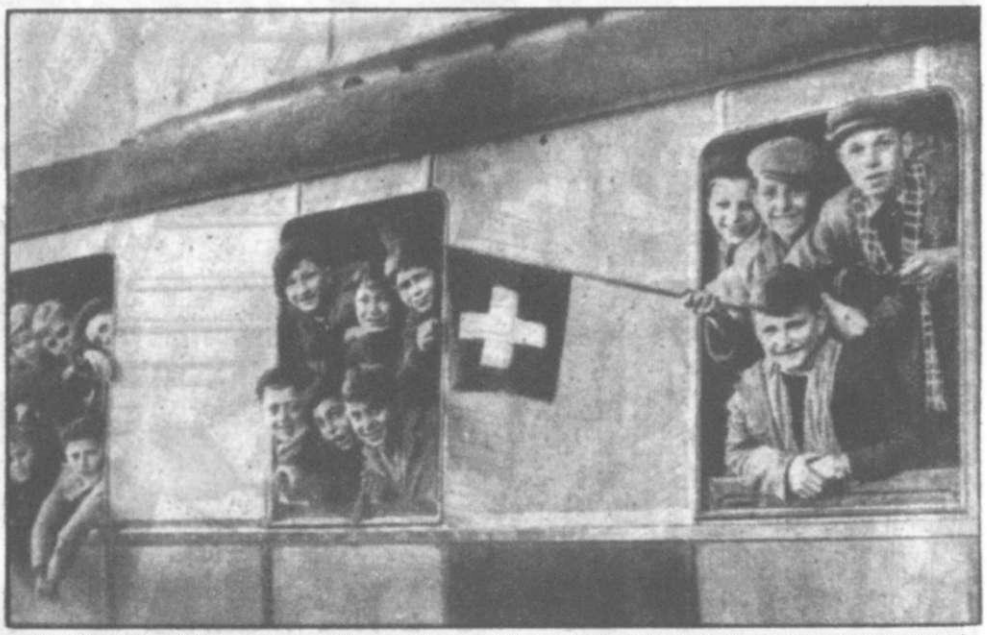
WHEREUPON his adventures began. He was involved in a disastrous evacuation with some machine-gunning from the air thrown in. Then under heavy bombardment he lost sight of his friends and their car which was carrying all his worldly belongings. With the retreating forces he was swept along southwards across the river Loire, and at last stopped in a little village which, luckily, was not included in the occupied zone at the armistice. There the excellent curé took him in; but when the curé's own relations began to flow in he could keep him no longer. So my friend went on to the next important town, which happened to be the chief town of a *département* in the right centre of France.

For three months he was looked after by the Little Sisters of the Poor. "They were very kind and considerate," he writes, "did not bother me about chapel and other observances, although I fancy they tacitly entertained the hope to convert me later on." In the meantime they rigged him out as best they could. "I suppose I had the proper down-and-out look, as a young man, one day, offered me 50 fr. in the street." All the time he was trying to get some job, but in a provincial town of 25,000 inhabitants, 175 miles away from Paris, it seemed hopeless. Still he went to the lycée; and there, one of the lycée masters—"a saint, if there is such a thing," he writes, "now unfortunately for me transferred to the top of the educational tree in Madagascar"—helped him to find his feet again by getting him in a family, where for some time he earned part of his keep by looking after the son's Latin and other lessons. Meanwhile, some of his clothes straggled in from Paris, so that he was soon more presentable. He succeeded in getting a few pupils in English, and by this means was able to keep the wolf at a shortish distance from the door. Now he has "many good friends and some amusing acquaintances: a paralysed English woman who has made me her business man; an old English jockey who can read but not write; a sort of red Indian; an Australian lady; a Palestinian girl, etc." So his interests are varied.

Not long before the Nazis seized the whole of France the family he was living with moved into a new house where there was no room for him, and he looked in vain for another in a family or a *pension*. But the town was swamped with people from the Occupied zone, and he had to put up at a local hotel whose landlord treated him as a friend. By a piece of luck he found among the refugees in the town the surgeon who had operated on his eye at the Rothschild Hospital in Paris, and who, being a Jew, had thought it advisable to shun the attentions of the Gestapo. However, my friend thinks it would not be wise, in the present unstable conditions, to undergo the second operation on the other eye. So, he writes, "I expect I shall have to worry through with one eye the rest of my days—not so many now, thank Heaven, but people are so kind that it is almost a pleasure to be 80 per cent blind."

THE rationing business he finds a weary affair. He goes to the baker himself and buys his bread for the day in the morning, and carries it about to places where one eats. He gets thin, but does not mind as he finds his general health keeps good enough. His morale keeps good enough, too. "It is no good being optimistic or pessimistic at this moment," he writes, "for we lack all the elements of a sound appreciation of the great problem. I don't take the papers (except for the crosswords) and I listen-in very irregularly. One feels, however, that something big, perhaps decisive, is preparing." So he replied last September to a friend in England who had inquired about his state of mind and how he managed his mental pabulum. "There is a goodish town library here," he wrote, "from which I take out books one day and hurl them back the next. I used to say that when I got old I would read no more but re-read; and it was a silly thing to say. I cannot stand the old idols. Jane Austen even bores me . . . But on the other hand Galsworthy is about the only modern I can get away with. So I fall back on French."

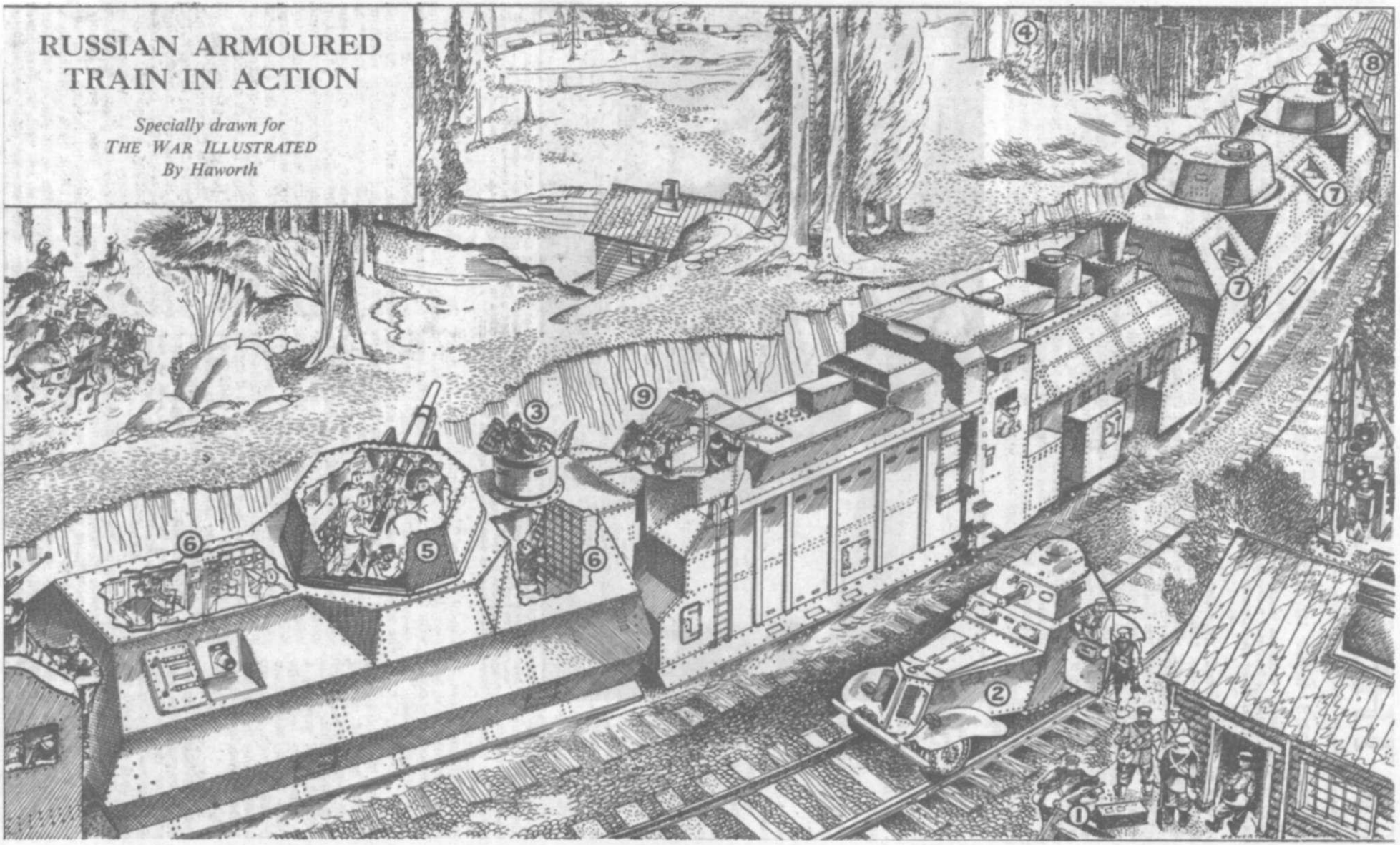
THIS gives an idea of the kind of life an Englishman led in Unoccupied France for two years. Last autumn he wrote, "The people are doing all they can to make things easier for me, and when pupils begin to come back from their holiday, I hope to be rid of a part of my anxiety. So I decline to be pessimistic." As to the future, he has no doubts about it: "The present is gloomy, the future unreadable, but the past is our sure possession; and I look back comfortingly to our long friendship, to all that we have been to each other, to all that we have done together. May we meet again, and take up something of the old life."



FRENCH CHILDREN—victims of the appalling conditions brought about by the German domination of their country—visited Switzerland in large numbers recently. This photo shows some of a party of 1,000 returning to Lyons after their recuperative holiday in a land which stands out in honourable isolation as an island of freedom in the ocean of Nazi slavery. The article in this page gives a vivid impression of life in France just before its complete occupation by the Germans. *Photo, New York Times Photos*

RUSSIAN ARMOURED TRAIN IN ACTION

Specially drawn for
THE WAR ILLUSTRATED
By Haworth



THE WHITE DEVIL—that is what the Nazis call a Soviet armoured train which operates in the central sector of the front before Moscow. And with good reason. Painted white, it is next to impossible to distinguish it against the wintry landscape, so that its guns are in action with a suddenness so unexpected as to seem uncanny. For long it has harassed the German lines, and for just as long the enemy have striven their hardest to capture it. In the defence of Sevastopol, and again before Leningrad, such trains were often used; and they have also cooperated extensively with the bands of guerilla partisans operating behind the German lines. Above is a dramatic representation of an engagement in the Russian forest.

Guerillas (1) have reported the presence of an enemy supply column, and the armoured train has moved forward. First the small armoured car (2), fitted with flanged wheels, makes a reconnaissance and returns to report to the train commander (3). Now, the reconnaissance officer gives directions to the guerillas. The train commander is seen telephoning instructions to the forward gun car, which has opened fire on the enemy. An observation platform (4)—these are built and used by the guerillas—is manned to note results of the shooting. Meanwhile, in the commander's car the gunners are loading (5), whilst shells are brought from the magazine (6).

These trains can mount 75-mm. or even larger guns, and mortars and machine-guns (7) are also carried. The whole train is armour-plated, in places with two separate layers. The powerful locomotive is between the gun cars; and at either end are wagons loaded with logs (8)—these to take the first shock of any mines laid on the tracks. The quadruple M.G. batteries at (9) can be lowered when not required and the lid to the cupola pulled over.

On the left of the drawing a body of Red cavalry is seen galloping into position for attack when the shelling ceases.

Timoshenko Takes the Offensive in the North

SOVIET FORCES ENTER DEMYANSK. This photograph gives a vivid impression of the main street after the town's liberation by Marshal Timoshenko's troops. The Germans held on to the Demyansk region for seventeen months, following its capture by them in Sept. 1941, when they broke through the Russian defences S.E. of Lake Ilmen.

MARSHAL TIMOSHENKO, it was announced on March 1, 1943, had launched an offensive against the German 16th Army in the region of Lake Ilmen, and had captured the towns of Demyansk, Lychkovo and Zaluchye. During the eight days of fierce fighting that ensued the Russians relentlessly pursued the enemy and liberated some 302 inhabited places, clearing an area of 2,350 sq. km. (about 900 sq. miles). During these same eight days the Red Army captured 3,000 German officers and men and a large quantity of war material, including some 78 aircraft, 97 tanks, 289 guns of various calibres, and 711 machine-guns.

German resistance at Demyansk was stubborn. The enemy used massed artillery, mortars and machine-guns, furiously counter-attacking with infantry supported by tanks. In order to avoid encirclement he began a hurried retreat, abandoning strong-points, dug-outs and trenches which it had taken him many months to build. Some 40 German planes were captured on Demyansk aerodrome.

The Germans set great store by what they called the "Demyansk fortress" area, but they endeavoured to minimize its loss by admitting on March 2 that it had been evacuated, while stating at the same time that "the Soviet offensive front in the Lake Ilmen sector has been extended to the south." The Demyansk bastion was, indeed, second only to Rzhev in the whole German front between Moscow and Leningrad. Marshal Timoshenko smashed the vast German padlock, which the enemy had put on Russian offensive action between Leningrad and Veliki Luki.

ON March 6 the Russians recaptured Gzhatsk, an important German base S.E. of Sychevka (reoccupied by the Red Army two days later) and advanced in the direction of Vyazma—the remaining German "hedgehog" in the eastern part of the salient pointing to Moscow and the chief outpost of Smolensk, situated 140 miles west of the capital. Swiftly they fought their way along Napoleon's famous road of retreat in 1812, and on March 12 the Germans evacuated Vyazma. Thus the last enemy stronghold threatening Moscow was removed.

RUSSIAN COMMANDERS MAKE FINAL PLANS before leaving with their armoured train for a surprise attack on enemy-held positions on the Northern front. Commander A. Bulavin (centre) discusses the impending attack with his officers, Lt. P. Gorolov (left) and Lt. N. Gorodny. Behind them is their white-painted train. (See illustration in opposite page.)

CAVALRY OF THE SOVIET GUARDS reconnoitring a position during an advance by the Red Army on the S.W. sector of the front. These Cavalry Guards have won renown on many a battlefield, vanquishing the enemy when he was most sorely pressed during the fierce fighting at the beginning of 1943. The courage, daring and intrepid skill displayed by these men are beyond praise, and have contributed in no small measure to our Ally's remarkable achievements.

Photos, U.S.S.R. Official, Planet News

THE WAR IN THE AIR

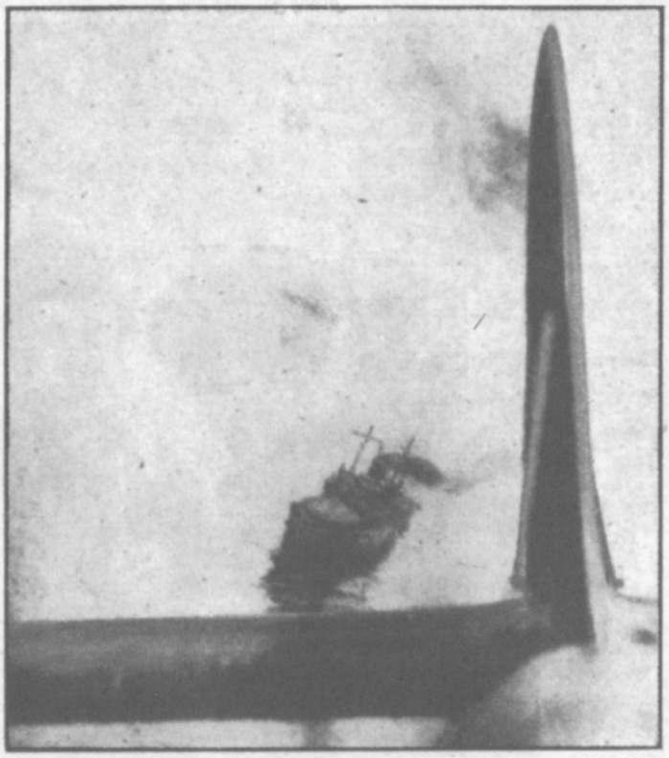
by Capt. Norman Macmillan, M.C., A.F.C.

OUTSTANDING among recent events in the air war was the naval victory won by an Army general by the use of air power. The setting for this apparently anomalous action was the Bismarck Sea, the tropical waters in the neighbourhood of New Guinea and the archipelago of large and small islands lying to the north-east of that currently-contested island. The commander was General MacArthur, the first defender of the Philippines and, since his departure from that command, the supreme commander of the United Nations forces in the south-western Pacific.

Reconnaissance aircraft had been reporting for some time the gathering of Japanese forces and ships in Rabaul, the excellent harbourage of the capital of New Britain. On Monday, March 1, 1943 a Japanese convoy moving down the coast of New Britain was sighted by reconnaissance aircraft in spite of the bad weather which the enemy apparently hoped would cloak its movements. Fourteen ships were seen—three cruisers, four destroyers, and seven transports. They were shadowed. Because of the Japanese concentrations in Rabaul, General MacArthur had meanwhile given instructions for the Allied (American and Australian) aircraft within the area to be concentrated into a striking force. On March 2 the longer range bombers—Fortresses and Liberators—flew out to the attack, and locating the convoy through heavy clouds, sank two transports.

On the succeeding day the convoy was observed to have been joined by another section of three destroyers and five transports. That day the air attack upon the convoy was intensified, and as the ships steamed within range of the medium bombers—Bostons, Mitchells, and Hampdens—these, too, flew to the attack, escorted by Lightning fighters, and followed up by Beaufighters.

Throughout the air-sea action Allied air attacks were made upon the principal Japanese land air base at Lae, and air fighting became fierce and frequent.



JAP CONVOY OFF NEW GUINEA was annihilated when attacked by U.S. planes, it was announced at the beginning of March 1943. Out of 15,000 troops 97 only survived the sinking of all the 22 ships of the convoy. Seen from a raiding aircraft, this Jap transport goes down in this Battle of the Bismarck Sea. *Photo, News Chronicle*

The superiority of the Allied forces was never in doubt. Some of the ships steamed on into the Huon Gulf, and there met their doom. Every ship in the convoy of 22 vessels was sunk between Rabaul and Lae, the latter enemy base in New Guinea being the intended destination of the convoy. Fifteen thousand men were killed or cast into the tropical waters. Those who attempted to reach the shore in barges and rafts (some of the rafts were reported to have been made from tree-trunks lashed together) were attacked from the air by fighters and bombers and decimated. Few can have escaped.

IN the air fighting over the ships and over the enemy aerodromes 102 Japanese aircraft out of a force of about 150 were shot down. The United Nations' losses were one bomber and three fighters, and a number of damaged aircraft which succeeded in returning to their bases. The victory was complete. There has been in history no more striking example of the power of the air weapon. Yet General MacArthur said that the forces employed in this air action were relatively small. Rather more than 100 tons of bombs were dropped. In this running fight lasting several days only a fragment of the concentrated power which is unleashed over German targets when 500 to 1,000 tons are dropped within an hour was employed. It is a further indication of the inevitability of defeat for the Powers who are unable to secure superiority in the air.

BATTLES in the Pacific Won by Aircraft Alone

In this action it appeared that the Japanese fighters were not good enough for the Allied aircraft which were arrayed against them, either in bombers or fighters. Now Australia has received her first units of Spitfire fighters, manned by British and Australian personnel, and defence in the Australasian zone will be correspondingly strengthened. These units were promised to Australia at an earlier date, but were diverted to North Africa in agreement with Mr. Curtin, Australia's Prime Minister, to share in the glory of the El Alamein battle and the subsequent driving of the Axis forces out of Egypt and Libya. That series of land actions demonstrated the absolute necessity of air support for land forces to achieve victory. Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder, who commanded the combined air forces in the Middle East during their advance, said recently: "I never subscribe to the view that the air alone can win the ultimate victory . . . I hope, however, that events have forced home that the air is now the governing factor in war."

But in three battles, those of the Coral Sea, Midway Island and the Bismarck Sea, the Americans have demonstrated that aircraft *can* win battles alone and without a shot being fired from a ship or land.

There are, too, those who hold the view that Germany can be utterly crushed by air bombardment alone, provided that the number of aircraft allocated for that purpose was sufficient. But the difficulty is that no action can now proceed to a sure end without air support, and the demands for aircraft from all the fighting fronts and from the ocean convoy zones increase every month, so that bombing power available to be used against Germany builds up slowly. To be catastrophic, the consequences of bombing must be greater than the power of recovery. That stage does not appear to have been reached in the bombing of Germany. The bombing of the Reich is therefore a part of the war of attrition. The demands of the field forces and the sea forces will determine whether in the course of this war it will be possible to prove the bombing theory that a nation's will and power to resist can be crushed from the air.

Meanwhile, Major-General Eaker, present Chief of the U.S. Air Forces in the United Kingdom, has said that an American bomber force in parity with Bomber Command will be built up in Britain to operate primarily by day.

I wonder how many readers have themselves heard the American Fortresses and Liberator bombers growling their way through the day skies to Continental targets? They are splendid aircraft, and they have done fine work, albeit as yet on a small scale. The Fortresses pass through the sky like formations of fish through the water. Their side elevations are extraordinarily shark-like. When aircraft like these can duplicate by day what Bomber Command does by night, the climacteric of a German breakdown will indeed be near.

Weather has slowed down air action in the South-West Pacific; but in the north, American bombers have again been raiding Kiska, the most advanced Japanese base in the Rat Islands. In Tunisia, stroke and counter-stroke on land and in the air follow one another as the First and Eighth Armies prepare for combined action. The greatest air activity has centred over Western Europe.

Bomber Command maintained its day and night offensive. By day the following targets were attacked: factories at Hengelo and near Liége (Feb. 28); Knaben molybdenum mines, Norway (Mar. 3); rail centres at Le Mans and near Valenciennes (Mar. 4); rail targets at Lingen, Germany, Aulnoye and Tergnier in France (Mar. 8); Le Mans rail centre and Renault factory (Mar. 9); Cockerill's armament works near Liége (Mar. 12). Four bombers were lost in these day raids.

NIGHT targets were St. Nazaire and West Germany, over 1,000 tons bombs (Feb. 28–Mar. 1); Berlin and West Germany and mine-laying (Mar. 1–2); mine-laying and West Germany (Mar. 2–3); Hamburg and West Germany (Mar. 3–4); mine-laying and West Germany (Mar. 4–5); Essen, nearly 1,000 tons bombs (Mar. 5–6); mine-laying (Mar. 7–8); Nuremberg, South and West Germany (Mar. 8–9); Munich, over 500 tons bombs, West Germany, and mine-laying (Mar. 9–10); Stuttgart (Mar. 11–12); Essen, over 1,000 tons bombs (Mar. 12–13). In these night raids 106 bombers were lost.

The U.S. Army Eighth Air Force bombed Brest and Lorient by day on March 6, losing three bombers and two escorting fighters; Rouen on March 12 without loss; and targets in Northern France on March 13.

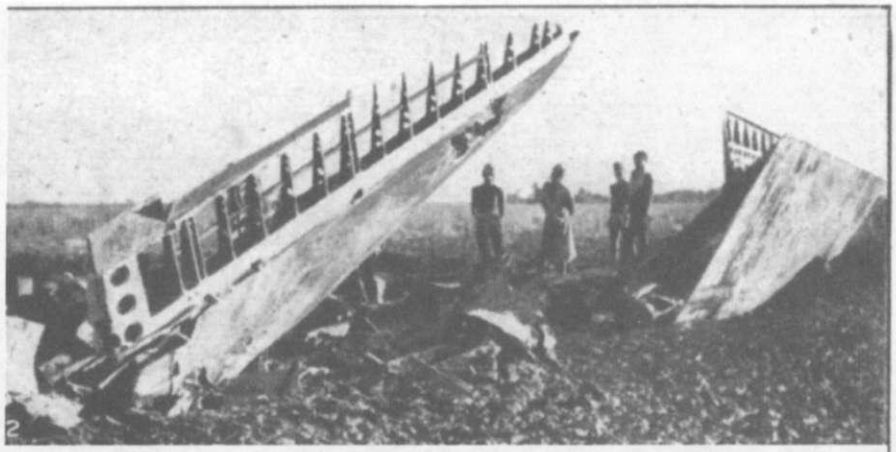
A new departure is the acquisition of helicopters by Britain for marine protection.

Albacores Over the George Cross Island

LIKE SOME MOSAIC PAVEMENT does Malta appear from the air. Hardly a tree is to be seen, but the countless stone walls, the carefully-constructed terraces, the villages dotting the plateau—all speak of many centuries of civilized order and growth. In the island's epic defence a great part has been played by the Fleet Air Arm. Here we see three of a truly gallant band—Albacores with their torpedoes "at the ready," speeding to engage enemy shipping.

Photo, Associated Press

Japanese Planes Shot Out of the Indian Sky



ENEMY AIR ATTACKS ON INDIAN CITIES have met with little success. 1, Flight Sergt. A. M. O. Pring, who intercepted Jap bombers during a night raid in the Calcutta area in Jan. 1943, shot down three in four minutes—a world record for night fighting. He received an immediate award of the D.F.M. 2, Indian youths view the wreckage of one of these bombers. 3, The charred remains of another. 4, Crowds gather round this smashed aircraft while pipers play triumphal music. *Photos, British and Indian Official*

Abyssinia's King of Kings Opens His Parliament

CELEBRATIONS IN ADDIS ABABA. The Negus, Haile Selassie I, who returned to his capital on May 5, 1941, was crowned "Lion of Judah, King of the Kings of Ethiopia," on Nov. 2, 1930. On the eve of the first anniversary of his coronation following the freeing of Ethiopia by the Allies, the Emperor opened his parliament. 1, The Royal car with its picturesque escort en route to the Parliament House. 2, The Emperor (descending steps towards the right of the photograph) leaving after the ceremony. 3, Haile Selassie "picking up the target" during a recent inspection of modern army equipment.

Photos, Associated Press

THE HOME FRONT

by E. Royston Pike

"WHO goes home?" The ancient phrase, new in the days when M.P.s used to club together after dark to traverse the footpad-infested fields which lay between Westminster and Charing Cross, had a painfully sombre ring when the Commons dispersed on the afternoon of March 3. For while they were debating the Navy estimates the Deputy-Speaker (Col. Clifton Brown) left the Chair, the Serjeant-at-Arms removed the mace from the table, and the Clerk Assistant rose and said, "With extreme sorrow I have to inform the House that Mr. Speaker died this afternoon." For fifteen years Capt. E. A. Fitzroy had guided their deliberations with a suave but firm touch, a complete impartiality, an occasional touch of dry humour, and a complete dignity that nothing could ruffle. Now he was dead (the first Speaker to die in office since 1789), and the House rose forthwith. Since there was now no Speaker it could not function—not even under the Deputy-Speaker, since he is the deputy of the Speaker, and the Speaker was dead.

WHEN the House met on March 9, the day already appointed—their sitting could not be expedited since in law there was none to call them together at an earlier date—their first business was the election of a successor to Capt. Fitzroy.

Mr. Anthony Eden, Leader of the House, rose to state that the King had given leave to the House to "proceed forthwith to the choice of a new Speaker." As he sat down the Clerk to the House pointed to Mr. G. Lambert, who was first an M.P. in 1891. Mr. Lambert proposed that the Deputy-Speaker, the Rt. Hon. Douglas Clifton Brown, should take the chair as Speaker; Mr. Tinker, in his turn answering the beckoning finger of the Clerk, seconded. Several other members having spoken in support, Col. Clifton Brown declared his willingness, though in no spirit of self-congratulation or self-confidence, to occupy the most honourable post in the House. "I will try, and that is the only pledge I can give you. I do promise that always to the limit of my ability I will give you my level best, and on that I pledge you my word." Then Mr. Lambert and Mr. Tinker, approaching Col. Clifton Brown, pulled him from his seat, ignoring his attempts to push them away—a strange old custom this, dating back to when the Speakership was no coveted post but a dangerous responsibility—and pulled and pushed him towards the chair. Then the Serjeant-at-Arms replaced the mace on the table.

A little later in the day the new Speaker proceeded to the House of Lords, where a Royal Commission indicated the King's assent to his appointment. After which, to the cry of "The Speaker elected," he returned to the Commons, assumed his full-bottomed wig and robes of office, and took the chair. Once again the House of Commons was able to function.

AFTER the not very satisfactory debate in the House of Commons it was the turn of the Lords to discuss the Beveridge Report. This they did on Feb. 24 and 25; and, as is so often the case in these days, the speeches of their lordships compared not at all unfavourably with those in the House below.

The Archbishop of Canterbury gave his emphatic support to "an epoch-making and epoch-marking report." The serf of former years, he said, had security without freedom; to some extent the wage-earning classes in our country have had freedom without security. What is now proposed is to give social security compatible with freedom. A week later, at a great meeting in Westminster organized by the Liberal Party, Sir William Beveridge replied to certain criticisms of his Report. In particular he referred to the complaint that he had not shown how "full employment," one of his three "Assumptions," could be maintained. But, he pointed out, when he was asked to report on Social Insurance and Allied Services he wasn't asked to design a complete suit—only the trousers. "I've designed the trousers," he said, "and my advice is that we had better put them on at once so that with a free mind we can see about a coat as well as other parts of our reconstruction wardrobe."

ANOTHER of the criticisms levelled at the Beveridge Scheme is that contained in the question, "Can we afford it?" Sir William Beveridge estimates that the total of the Security Budget for the first full year of the scheme, assumed to be 1945, will be £697 millions, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have to find only £86

HIS MAJESTY — MUNITION WORKER
Dressed in engineer's overalls, on two evenings a week the King works at a bench in a small munitions plant staffed by members of the Royal Household, turning out with delicate precision tools special parts for a gun used by the R.A.F. Always interested in economic matters, his Majesty is now acquiring a practical knowledge of industry which cannot but make his questions—in this photo he is seen talking to a fifteen-year-old worker in a R.O.F. —even more to the point. *Photo, Planet News*

millions over and above what the State is already committed to. Who dares say (urge Beveridge supporters) that this, less than a week's war expenditure, is a burden that cannot be borne? Besides, no account is taken of the possible—probable, nay certain—increase in the national income in the years after the war. Nothing stays put, as George Bernard Shaw has frequently reminded us; certainly not the national income, nor the industries from which that income is derived. After the War it will be a very different Britain—a vastly different business world.

Few people indeed realize the revolutionary changes in the technique of almost every sort of manufacture that are promised by recent scientific developments.

Some months ago there was published in The Times (Nov. 9, 1942) the report of an address delivered to a convention of the American Chemical Society by Dr. Charles M. A. Stine, adviser on research to the great Du Pont combine. Mr. Stine pointed out that the War is compressing into the space of months scientific developments which, without this spur of necessity, might have taken half-a-century to realize. Fuels, metals, and plastics are now ready to complete the revolution in transport begun early in this century. Measured by the old pace of development we are now technically in the 1960's of motor-cars; weights in future may be half what they are now, power may be up, fuels may yield fifty miles to the gallon. Housing plastics, rustless steels, non-ferrous alloys, various types of composition board and synthetic finishes—all will be available in profusion. Stainless steel may be a common roofing material. We shall have glass that is unbreakable and will float, wood that won't burn, shoes containing no leather, machinery bearings containing no metal. So great is the amount of fertilizer chemicals that the new capacity for high-pressure synthesis of ammonia will be able to supply, that the basic trends of agriculture may be changed. The manufacture of chemical rubbers, aluminium, magnesium, and a hundred other products will be at a rate many times as great as before the War. Industry, concludes Mr. Stine, will emerge from the War with the capacity for making scores of chemical and other raw materials on a scale that only two years ago would have been beyond comprehension. He was speaking of America, but we may be sure that British manufacturers and industrialists are not going to be behindhand in this tremendous war-time revolution.

AMONG the preparations for the North Africa expedition (revealed Sir James Grigg, Secretary of State for War, when introducing the Army estimates in the House of Commons on February 25) was the moving from billets and depots to the ports in a period of about three weeks of 185,000 men, 20,000 vehicles and 220,000 tons of stores. This meant running 440 special troop trains, 680 special freight trains, and 15,000 railway wagons by ordinary goods services.

Such figures speak volumes as to the efficiency of the railways under the tremendous strains of the War. Yet before the War, as Sir Thomas Royden, Chairman of the London Midland and Scottish Railway Company, said at the annual meeting of the company on March 5, there was a fairly wide belief that railways were becoming, if indeed they had not already become, obsolete as the main means of transport—and this in spite of the fact that the passenger journeys on British railways represented some 20,000,000,000 miles of travel and the freight traffic 17,000,000,000 ton miles. These figures have been outstripped during the war period. Last year the passenger traffic increased by a further 10,000,000,000 passenger miles and the freight traffic by a further 7,000,000,000 ton miles compared with pre-War. Whatever the future may hold, the successive Ministers of War Transport have good reason for their recognition of the railways as the backbone of the country's transport system.

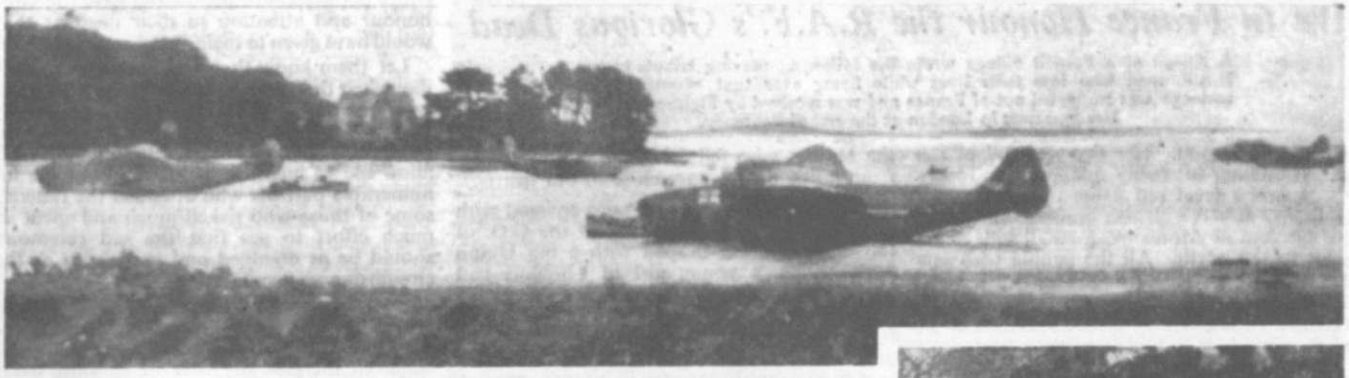
HAS anyone met a man in a Utility suit? Maybe there are some about, but it is rare indeed to find in a London street a man in a two-piece with no turn-ups to his trousers, no pleats, and a bare minimum of pockets.

It is not just male obstinacy or innate conservatism that makes the Utility suits unpopular; trousers with turn-ups last longer and there is always something to put in any and every pocket. When a Whitechapel tailor was charged the other day with making trousers with pleats, turn-ups and four pockets, a Board of Trade inspector told the Old Street magistrate, Mr. F. O. Langley, that it was the general opinion of the trade that the restrictions saved no cloth at all. That Mr. Langley was inclined to sympathize was obvious from the low penalties he imposed.

On the same day Mr. Dalton, when opening a "Count your Coupons" exhibition at Charing Cross Underground Station, gave a pledge "not to buy a new suit of clothes until the War is over." But it would be interesting to know how many suits the President of the B.O.T. had in the pre-coupon age—with or without turn-ups!

ARE cut flowers a necessity in wartime? The Ministry of War Transport says no, and last November it made an order forbidding the consignment of flowers by rail, and at the end of the year the sending of flowers by parcel post was also prohibited. The flower traders were not to be outdone, however, and soon men carrying bulging suitcases were remarked travelling from Penzance to Paddington. Whereupon the carrying of flowers to market by train passengers was banned. But still undefeated the traders proceeded to send their flowers by sea and by boy cyclists working in relays. Then it was announced that the rail ban would be lifted on March 25 for the summer.

Wings for Victory Above Our Roving Camera



POST-WAR CIVIL AVIATION is receiving close attention in Britain, where the enormous advances made at the spur of military necessity are fully realized. Above, long-distance flying-boats at a marine terminal airport of British Overseas Airways.

GAS PRODUCER BUSES (left) have recently made their appearance in London. On March 3, 1943 it was stated that three of these vehicles were employed on the Hither Green-W. Kilburn route, and that eventually some 550 would be put into service.

INVASION BELLS, it was announced on March 3, 1943, will be used in future as a local alarm signal for any form of attack by enemy troops, whether these come by sea or air. Right, troops carry out routine inspection of church bells.

LONDON'S 'WINGS FOR VICTORY' week opened on March 6, 1943. The target was £150,000,000, and by March 18 the total wss announccd of £162,015,869. Below, crowds in Trafalgar Square gather round the Lancaster bomber placed there, as carrier pigeons are released bearing messages for 1,300 War Savings Committees.

Photos, Planet News, Ltd., Associated Press, Sport & General

I WAS THERE! Eye Witness Stories of the War

We In France Honour the R.A.F.'s Glorious Dead

A citizen of a French village wrote the following moving tribute to our R.A.F. men who lose their lives while flying over that country. The message was smuggled out of France and was received by Fighting French Headquarters in London at the end of February.

IT was 8.40 p.m. The sky was full of the rumbling of many planes. Suddenly I saw a great red flame to the north of Louhans. It was a British bomber which had just crashed at Moncony, a small village six miles to the north. All the people who saw this were in a state of anguish ; we learned that it was a Halifax bomber No. 42,036. The plane had ten Britons aboard, nine of whom were killed. Only one baled out.

On the following day the catastrophe was the only subject of conversation at Moncony. The whole population was terribly upset. The funeral of the heroic victims was to take place on Sunday at 4.30. A crowd of ten thousand had come to follow the dead to their last resting-place, when an order—coming no doubt from Vichy—postponed the ceremony to the morrow ; the authorities were afraid of patriotic demonstrations.

On the Monday, at 2.30, the funeral procession left the village school towards the cemetery. The nine coffins were pulled by horses from neighbouring farms. The procession was led by a lieutenant from Bourg, representing the French Army. Military honours were rendered by a section of a local regiment, and then followed a crowd of two thousand carrying wreaths with the following inscriptions : " To our liberators," " To the Defenders of the World's Liberty," " To the Heroes who fell for us," " You are far from home but you are close to our hearts."

The massive oak coffins were covered with an avalanche of flowers, that of the C.O. of the bomber being draped with a big Union Jack which a young girl of Louhans had made by working all night. The coffins were lined up on the ground in the cemetery in front of a large ditch, then the *curé* of the parish uttered a last prayer and a last goodbye to the noble victims in simple, moving and Christian words.

We then saw an unforgettable thing—a choir of young girls from the village singing God Save the King slowly, majestically and perfectly executed, and then the Marseillaise which was taken up at once by the whole crowd. The eyes of all were filled with tears and we all thought of the families of the dead back in England, families who perhaps are still unaware of those for whom we were weeping. Let those families know that the entire population of the district gave the same honour and attention to their dead as they would have given to their own dearest relatives.

Let them know that their tombs—until the day when they may be taken back to England—will be daily surrounded by prayers and by flowers from real French men and women, those who do not forget. Before finishing, allow me to mention in the name of the innumerable patriots who attended the funeral, some of those who risked much and spent so much effort to see that the sad ceremony should be as dignified and impressive as the circumstances demanded :

Civil Servants of the district, the various groups who brought flowers and wreaths, the young girls of St. Germain-du-Bois who achieved the *tour de force* of learning overnight the words of God Save the King in English, and the unknown young girl who had so well made a British flag with the red, white and blue cloth which she had at home.

Finally, don't let us forget the thousands of people who covered twenty to thirty miles on foot or on bicycles in order to do their duty as good Frenchmen.

'HEROES WHO FELL FOR US.' As told in this page, the entire population of a French country district paid homage to the memory of nine British airmen who lost their lives when flying over France. They were buried with full military honours at Moncony, and this photograph shows the oak coffins surrounded with flowers.

Photo, British Official

How London's Home Guard A.A. Greeted the Raiders

When German raiders came to bomb the capital on January 17, London's H.G. anti-aircraft gunners went into action for the first time. Edward C. Gayler Second Lieutenant in the Home Guard A.A. (and Finance News Editor of The Sunday Dispatch, from which this story is reprinted), tells what it feels like to fire Britain's secret barrage.

FOR months we have been on duty, practising our gun drill in the dark, having " dummy-dummy " turnouts in the middle of the night, yet never getting a chance to fire at the enemy. Indeed, we were approaching the dangerous state of boredom, which can only lead to inefficiency.

Very few of our men had ever seen the guns fired. Some of the lucky ones—mostly officers—had been down on the coast and had fired the guns, but then only in daytime and out to sea. No one really knew what to expect when all our guns were fired together.

Quite frankly, I, with my brother officers, had been hoping that some other officer would be on duty when the guns were first fired, but I would not have missed this opportunity for a fortune and I know that my colleagues would have been proud to sign the orderly book that night in my place.

I had been on the site barely five minutes when the bugle sounded our general alarm. Soon after the public alert was sounded and gunners poured on to the site anxious to have a crack at the enemy. But by then all our guns were fully manned by the duty men and dozens of volunteers had to be sent home again.

ALL the officers arrived to take charge of their own men and within a few seconds London's barrage began. Up till then I had been a little nervous as to what to expect and was all too conscious of my responsibilities. I went from troop to troop having a last-minute talk to the men.

Enemy planes were getting nearer and nearer, and we were able to trace their progress by the burst of Home Guard shells away to the south.

Those of us who knew what to expect recognized the burst of neighbouring batteries from the fancy patterns they weaved in the sky while the enemy was still some miles off.

Our orders were given. Not a man forgot his drill, although none had ever before received orders in the din of battle. The thud of the 3·7s and the 4·5s sounded monotonously in our ears, and through the barrage I heard the gun commanders repeat their orders " Stand by."

From my command post I heard " Fire ! " and instantaneously there swept across the gun site a terrible swish. The whole area around was lit by explosions. Our shells

were on their way to the enemy planes above us.

In the crash of the explosions I hardly noticed the vivid flashes and the gunners were too engrossed in their job to feel the tremor which shook the earth. They know their job, those men. As soon as their first salvo was off they were busy reloading.

My first reaction was one of relief that things had gone off so smoothly. I had never seen such a sight before. Although I had been every night in the London blitz, this was something more terrible than I ever thought existed.

My excitement was increased when a bombardier reported, "*We've hit one, sir!*" Although, for a variety of reasons, it may not be possible for the authorities to verify our claim, I know that our gunners did a good job and at least they can credit themselves with a hit. No doubt every plane which passed within range of the Home Guard battery was damaged.

When the lull came the men went off to supper and to rest, but, so keen were they to have another crack, that when the second alarm came some hours later they were at their posts in record time.

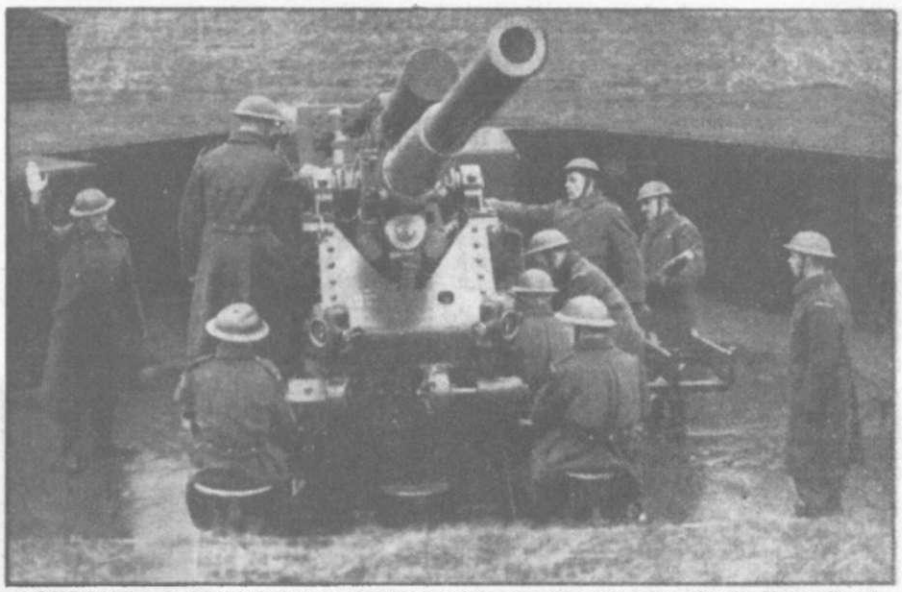
The effect on the morale of the Home Guard was better than months of training. They have been whetted by the blood of their first enemy aircraft, and they are anxious now to take on all comers. And what is true of my own site is true also of the many other Home Guard anti-aircraft batteries.

But here I must give a very necessary word of warning. Our shells are meant for the Nazi planes, but we cannot pump thousands of shells into the sky without a rain of metal below.

Compared with the number of shells fired the number which fall unexploded is infinitesimal. And though twelve people were killed by our barrage, it was due mainly to their own negligence. It was those Londoners who stayed in the streets or who stood on their doorsteps to watch the "fireworks" who were killed or injured.

If you do not take cover immediately you hear gunfire then you are asking to be a casualty. And remember that our civil defence workers have enough to do looking after the bomb casualties. Next time there is a night raid the more noise you hear the safer you will be, so stay indoors and don't expose yourself to a hail of metal by trying to see what is going on.

It isn't clever to look up into the sky now that London's air barrage is the heaviest ever known, and if you get hurt through staying out when you should be under cover it will be your own fault.



LONDON'S A.A. DEFENCES have now been taken over to some extent by the Home Guard. A graphic description of the intense barrage put up by a Home Guard battery during an air attack is given in this and the preceding page. This photo shows H.Gs. at a gun-post during practice. *Photo, Topical*

I Was in the Achates When She Fought to the End

Ordinary Seaman Ted Cutler, who was the oldest man in the destroyer Achates, tells how his ship, fighting to the end against a German cruiser, was sunk during the defence of a convoy on the way to Russia, on the last day of 1942. His vivid story is given here by courtesy of the B.B.C.

Four months ago I had my elbows on the bar of my own pub at Colchester. You see, I'm 48, and up till then I'd imagined that this war was a bit beyond me. But in that old pub, first the Australians, then the Canadians and then the Americans came roaring in. This one had been to the Middle East; that one to Persia—they'd all done something worth while. I got tired of this, and suddenly I made up my mind to become the only bald-headed sailor in the Navy.

I must say I was rather proud when I was passed A1, although I have lost my early streamline. In no time I was drafted to a training school. Within ten weeks came the great news—a ship. My highest hopes had been a patrol vessel, until I suddenly knew I was drafted to the destroyer Achates.

Gosh—here was action! The rigorous, down-to-the-bone life in the destroyer shrunk the last traces off me of 25 years of easy living. I should say 60 per cent of my shipmates in the Achates were about 23 years old. I kept my ears open for any remarks about "Grandpa." I wasn't going to stand for that—although, as a matter of fact, I am one.

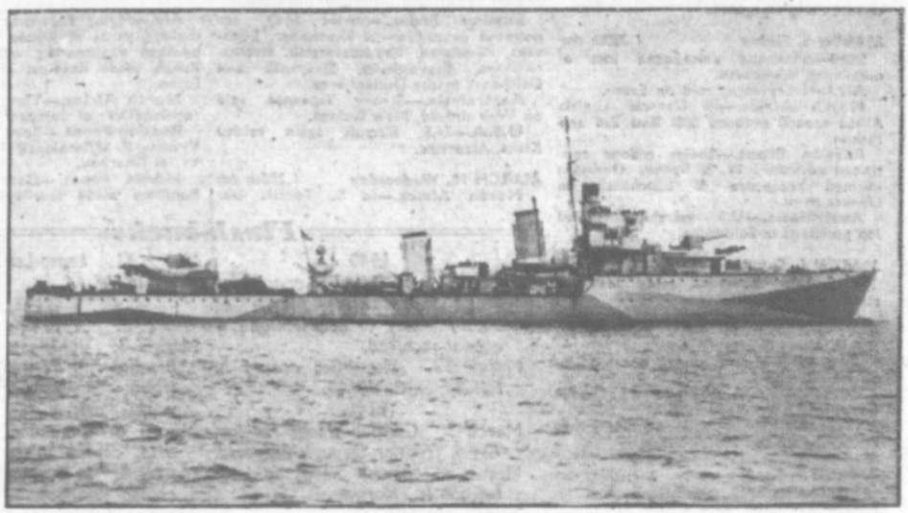
I have never been so excited as when the Achates in a line of destroyers tore northwards all-out to take charge of its convoy. That was life! It wasn't long before we struck interference. Some big German stuff had manœuvred up near to us in the darkness, and at 8.30 on the morning of December 31 the first salvos crashed out.

Our Achates was selected to make a smoke screen to shield the convoy, and the enemy picked us out for his early fire. We must have been conspicuous. The German cruiser got us the first time. It'll show you how green I was. I said to our gunnery instructor: "Was that our big gun?" He said: "No, you mug, we've been hit."

Later, I was down in the T.S. (Transmitting Station to you). Then another crack blasted open the side of the hull. We tried to block the gap with a six-foot-wide bookcase, but it fell right through.

By now it had occurred to most of us that it was time to seek pastures new, and we made for the deck. There was chaffing and singing going on to the last. A lot of us lay on the heeling hull until it was evident the old Achates must go. Before the action, some of us had had a turkey put into the refrigerator to have for Christmas dinner when we got to Russia. One wag, just before the Achates rolled over, bawled out: "What about our blankety turkey?"

Once you dived into the water you became numb in a few minutes. I thanked my lucky stars I'd been a competition swimmer. I had thought to rip off my duffle coat and heavy gear, and now struck out for the rescue trawler about half a mile away. I wasn't doing very well and was getting very tired of it all when suddenly someone tore past me at knots, doing the trudgeon stroke. I thought: "I can do that, too"—and beat him to the trawler. I never saw my unknown rival again. I hope I meet him one day. He probably saved my life.



H.M.S. ACHATES went down valiantly defending a convoy to Russia on Dec. 31, 1942; the story of the destroyer's end is recounted in this page. She was completed in 1930, displaced 1,350 tons, and carried a complement of 138. *Photo, British Official.*

We Dropped Our Picks & Shovels to Fight the Nazis

In the battle area south of Medjez, Tunisia, men of the Pioneer Corps dropped picks and shovels and with a rifle and 50 rounds apiece held up the German onslaught until relieved by the Guards. Navvy-warriors' stories, as told to Alan Humphreys, Reuters Special Correspondent, and to Archer Brooks, War Correspondent of The Daily Mirror, appear below.

"IT was thrilling to think that the Pioneers got there before the Guards," said Corporal Norman Hampshire, of Sheffield. "We were working on a road, and the ration wagon was just coming up with dinner when an officer dashed up on a motor bicycle.

"'The Germans are breaking through at ——,' he said. 'Dump your tools anywhere and grab your rifles. Stop any transport going along the road, or march, but get into the front line. You have less than an hour and a half, and you have got to stick there at all costs.'

"We reached our positions during the afternoon. There was a tank battle and we saw several German tanks go up in flames. It rained in sheets throughout the night. Next morning we were heavily shelled, and later in the afternoon the enemy threw grenades at us. There we stayed until our tanks came along." Corporal Hampshire, who served in the Navy during the last war, in the Warspite, was for a time a radio operator at Malta.

With him in action was Corporal William Kirkpatrick, of Girvan, Ayrshire, who won the Belgian Croix de Guerre. "It was hot enough while it lasted," he said. "It put me back a good twenty-five years. I was in the Royal Scots and fought on the Somme, at Ypres and Passchendaele. I was a coal-miner. It was hard work and I thought I would take on something easier for a spell. I don't like fireside soldiering. It is like the old times under shell-fire again. The tank shells are not like the Jack Johnsons and coal boxes the Jerry used to throw at us on the Somme, but they're nasty little things all the same. And I must hand it to these boys who were in their first 'do' for the way they stood up to it."

It was a new experience for Private Edward Burton, 37, of Pellatt Road, East Dulwich, a printer in peacetime, who said, "The shelling was a bit nasty. Six of us were playing nap in a trench when it started, and they were using shrapnel, which we had never seen before, but we soon got used to it, and went back to the game. When the Guards relieved us we fell back into the native graveyard, where the skulls and bones lying about gave us the shivers."

Private Alan Benford, whose home is at Highcross Road, Claybrook, Rugby, manned the company's only Bren gun. Alan is only 20, and he found it exciting waiting for Jerries to come into his gunsights:

"We had front seats for the tank battle: and did we cheer when the first Jerry tank went up in flames! I counted fourteen enemy tanks in action with ours and saw five out of them knocked out. We couldn't get any sleep in the night because of the rain."

Another veteran was Pte. Thomas Fagan, 49, of Dublin. He was at Mons in 1914.

MEN OF THE PIONEER CORPS (see accompanying text), Royal Engineers, and other units are here shown unloading ammunition and stores shortly after the opening of our Tunisian campaign. This photo was taken at an advanced base W. of Bizerta. *Photo, Keystone*

OUR DIARY OF THE WAR

MARCH 3, 1943, Wednesday *1,278th day*

Air.—Daylight raid by Mosquitoes on molybdenum mines at Knaben in Norway. Heavy night raid on Hamburg.

North Africa.—Enemy attacks continued in Sejenane area of N. Tunisia.

Mediterranean.—U.S. aircraft made daylight raid on Messina.

Russian Front.—Soviet troops occupied Rzhev after prolonged battle.

Australasia.—Entire Japanese convoy of 11 transports and 10 warships sunk by Allied bombers in Bismarck Sea.

Home Front.—Two small-scale night raids on London; accident at Tube shelter caused death of 173 persons.

MARCH 4, Thursday *1,279th day*

Air.—U.S. Flying Fortresses raided Hamm and Rotterdam by day.

North Africa.—First Army troops retired from Sejenane to Tamera. French troops occupied Nefta in S. Tunisia.

Mediterranean.—Heavy bombers raided Naples by night.

Russian Front.—In Donetz Basin Germans claimed recapture of Proletarskaya and Slavyansk.

MARCH 5, Friday *1,280th day*

Sea.—Admiralty announced loss of minelayer Welshman.

Air.—Heavy night raid on Essen.

North Africa.—In Central Tunisia Allied troops entered Sidi Bou Zid and Pichon.

Russian Front.—Soviet troops continued advance S.W. of Rzhev. Germans claimed recapture of Lisichansk on Donetz front.

Australasia.—U.S. warships shelled Jap positions in Solomons.

MARCH 6, Saturday *1,281st day*

Air.—U.S. bombers made daylight raids on Brest and Lorient.

North Africa.—Attacks by Rommel's tanks and infantry were repulsed by Eighth Army in Mareth area.

Russian Front.—Gzhatsk occupied by Soviet troops.

Burma.—R.A.F. Liberators made heavy attack on Mandalay.

General.—Stalin awarded military title of Marshal of the Soviet Union.

MARCH 7, Sunday *1,282nd day*

Sea.—Admiralty announced loss of trawler Lord Hailsham.

North Africa.—In Mareth region Rommel's forces withdrew N. of Medenine.

Australasia.—U.S. heavy bombers attacked enemy bases in Solomons.

U.S.A.—American bombers raided Kiska in the Aleutians.

MARCH 8, Monday *1,283rd day*

Air.—U.S. Fortresses and Liberators bombed U-boat supply centre at Rennes and railway yards at Rouen. R.A.F. made heavy night raid on Nuremberg.

North Africa.—In N. Tunisia enemy attack was held near Tamera; in the south French troops occupied Tozeur.

Mediterranean.—Allied bombers raided Palermo and Agrigento.

Russian Front.—Soviet troops captured Sychevka, N. of Vyasma, after stubborn fighting.

MARCH 9, Tuesday *1,284th day*

Air.—R.A.F. made heavy raid on Munich.

Mediterranean.—Fighter-bombers from Malta attacked railways in Sicily.

Russian Front.—Soviet H.Q. announced evacuation of Krasnodar, Lozovaya, Pavlograd, Krasnoarmeisk, Kramatorskaya, Barvenkovo, Slavyansk and Lisichansk in the Donetz area.

Australasia.—Strong Japanese raid on Wau airfield, New Guinea.

U.S.A.—U.S. aircraft again raided Kiska, Aleutians.

MARCH 10, Wednesday *1,285th day*

North Africa.—In S. Tunisia our troops repelled attacks at Ksar Ghilane with heavy loss to enemy.

Russian Front.—Soviet troops occupied Biely, in Smolensk region; in the Donetz basin German threat to Kharkov increased.

Australasia.—Fortress bombers attacked Jap base of Wewak, New Guinea.

MARCH 11, Thursday *1,286th day*

Sea.—Admiralty announced loss of submarine P 311.

Air.—R.A.F. made heavy night attack on Stuttgart.

North Africa.—In S. Tunisia French troops occupied Metlaoui, between Tozeur and Gafsa.

Russian Front.—Strong German attacks repulsed south and west of Kharkov.

General.—First official reports from H.Q. of French guerillas told of train-wrecking and other activities.

MARCH 12, Friday *1,287th day*

Air.—Flying Fortresses attacked marshalling yards at Rouen and Mosquitoes bombed engineering works near Liége. R.A.F. made heaviest bombing raid on Essen.

North Africa.—Three enemy attacks repulsed W. of Sejenane.

Russian Front.—Soviet troops entered Vyasma, E. of Smolensk; Russians retired W. of Kharkov.

Home Front.—German fighter-bombers made low-level day raid on Greater London area; five out of 24 FW 190s shot down by fighters of a Norwegian squadron.

General.—Announced that Mr. Eden had arrived in Washington.

MARCH 13, Saturday *1,288th day*

Air.—American heavy bombers attacked railway yards at Amiens Abbeville and Poix.

Mediterranean.—U.S. Liberators made night raid on Naples harbour.

Russian Front.—Germans drove wedge into defences W. of Kharkov; heavy attacks also delivered from north and south.

Australasia.—Allied aircraft attacked Jap convoy making for Wewak, New Guinea.

MARCH 14, Sunday *1,289th day*

Sea.—Light coastal forces manned by men of Royal Norwegian Navy penetrated fjord and torpedoed two vessels in Floroe harbour, N. of Bergen.

Air.—Whirlwind bombers made daylight attacks on airfields at Abbeville and Maupertus.

Russian Front.—Germans claimed capture of Kharkov.

Burma.—Heavy fighting in Rathedaung area, where Japanese launched attacks.

MARCH 15, Monday *1,290th day*

Russian Front.—Soviet troops evacuated Kharkov.

China.—Reported that Chinese had gained important victory in Yangtze River front W. of Hankow.

Burma.—U.S. aircraft attacked Gokteik railway viaduct between Mandalay and Lashio.

Australasia.—Allied aircraft inflicted heavy damage on Japanese transports off Aru Is. Japs raided Port Darwin.

U.S.A.—American aircraft made six bombing attacks on Kiska, Aleutians.

MARCH 16, Tuesday *1,291st day*

Sea.—Two large enemy supply ships torpedoed by light naval forces in North Sea.

Air.—Mosquitoes bombed railway workshops at Paderborn, W. Germany, in daylight.

Russian Front.—Soviet troops held enemy attacks S. of Kharkov and W. of Byelgorod.

Australasia.—Fortress bombers made heavy raid on Rapopo airfield, Rabaul.

U.S.A.—Three more raids by U.S. bombers on submarine base at Kiska.

Flash-backs

1940

March 12. *M. Daladier announced Allied expeditionary force of 50,000 ready to help Finland if appeal received.*

March 13. *Hostilities ceased in Russo-Finnish War.*

1941

March 3. *German troops reached Greek frontier through Bulgaria.*

March 4. *British naval raid on Lofoten Is., Norway.*

March 6. *Allied forces from Somaliland entered Ethiopia.*

March 11. *Lease-Lend Bill became law in U.S.A.*

1942

March 3. *Japanese air raids on Broome and Wyndham, W. Australia. R.A.F. bombed Renault works, Paris.*

March 6. *Japanese entered Batavia, capital of Java.*

March 8. *In Burma, Japanese occupied Rangoon.*

March 11. *Japanese landed at Buka in the Solomons.*

Editor's Postscript

Do they call it a b'airn or a child in your part of the world? Do they speak of a brook or a beck, a biggin or a dwelling? Do they close their een and rest their heads on a cod? Do they do their courting in the gloaming, milk the kine, put on shoon, set traps for mousen or mouses, turn not the other cheek but the other wang? Do they say "I mun go" or "her told she" or "do ee give it to we"? Do they pronounce cup to rhyme with soup, and would with mud? The Association for Planning and Regional Reconstruction (32, Gordon Square, London, W.C.1) wants to know, and among the people to whom they have sent their questionnaires are (I learn from The Land Girl) the Women's Land Army.

Why the Land Girls? Because for the most part they are newcomers to the districts to which they are sent, and so, if they keep their ears open, they are likely to be struck at once by an unusual word, a novel turn of phrase. As often as not the villagers don't know that there are any unusual words in their vocabulary; they have always called a broom a besom, or said they were rad when they were afraid. The Land Girl tells of one W.L.A. girl in Hampshire who lived with a cowman and his wife. At first she could not make out what he meant when, sitting down to breakfast after milking, he used to say, "I feel that lear and cold." Apparently in that part of Hampshire the old word lear is still used to mean hungry or empty. That is the sort of information that the Association wants, and filling up the little questionnaires should help the Land Girls to pass the time—if they have any surplus time to pass. "Oh, oh, the farmer's girl!" writes Ola Trist in The Land Girl from a farm down in Cornwall:

Seven o'clock on a winter's morn
I start my little day,
And all day long I am tending cows
in a conscientious way . . .

I sit in the sun and consume a bun
when the morning's half-way through,
Then go with a rush and madly brush—I've got so much to do!
I clear the mud, and mop the blood
when the turnip knife misses its way,
And walk for miles over hedges and stiles for cows that have gone astray . . .

Wing Cdr. R. R. S. TUCK, D.S.O., D.F.C., and 2 Bars. By Feb. 16, 1941, when he was awarded a second Bar, he had brought down 27 enemy aircraft. He was reported a prisoner of war in 1942.
Drawn by Capt. Cuthbert Orde, Crown Copyright reserved

Among my letters the other morning was one from a young man of nineteen who complains most bitterly that he has recently been turned down for air-crew duties in the R.A.F. on account of bad eyesight. "I am very eager to fly," he writes, "and I do not see why we unfortunates should be deprived of the main desire of our lives. Could not the Air Ministry find some possible means of allowing us the chance to fly? Why don't they allow us to wear glasses while flying, suitably fitted in the flying helmet? Is it possible to fly if one has the lens inserted in the eye? Would Ferry Command duties not be suitable for men whose eyesight is not the best? I am dying to fly and have a shot at the Germans, but I am afraid I shall have to sit back and watch." Only the Air Ministry can give the answers to these questions, but it seems a pity that so much youthful fire should be permitted to burn itself out. And I have noticed in a recent list of R.A.F. awards the name of Acting Squadron Leader G. B. Warnes, described as Fighter Command's only operational pilot wearing contact lenses—glasses fitting inside the eyelids. Yet when Mr. Warnes (who before the War was an airman and has recently sunk an armed trawler, bombed a distillery, and made low-level raids on enemy airfields) first applied to join the R.A.F. he was told his eyesight wasn't good enough for flying duties. The Germans probably wish he didn't see so well.

From what readers tell me it is clear that they like to be informed of "War books" which are possessed of more than a merely ephemeral interest. Here are two which I can recommend. The first is The Fleet Air Arm by the novelist, Mr. John Moore (Chapman and Hall, 5s.). Mr. Moore writes from practical experience as an F.A.A. pilot, and his book describes both the history of the Fleet Air Arm from its origins in the last war and its most outstanding achievements in the present struggle—from the sinking of a Koenigsberg class cruiser in the harbour at Bergen on April 12, 1940 (the first time in history that a major unit of any fleet had been sunk by air attack), to the great battle in the Channel nearly two years later, when the Scharnhorst and Gneisenau slipped out of Brest. There is a chapter on our aircraft-carriers, and another on the aircraft which the men of the F.A.A. know so well how to use—the Skuas, Rocs, and Gladiators, the Walrus and the Seafox, and those "Stringbags" which "looked obsolescent before the War and have remained obsolescent ever since, but have never become obsolete." Mr. Moore quotes the song made in their honour:

The Swordfish fly over the ocean,
The Swordfish fly over the sea;
If it were not for King George's Swordfish,
Where the 'ell would the Fleet Air Arm be?

My second recommendation is a book which has already received wide recognition—and very deservedly: They Were Expendable, by Mr. W. L. White (Hamish Hamilton, 6s.). It is the story of the little band of very gallant gentlemen, the young officers of the U.S. Motor Torpedo-boat Squadron 3, who covered themselves with glory in the defence of the Bataan Peninsula and Corregidor in the great Philippines battle of a year ago. It was one of the four solitary survivors of the squadron who explained to Mr. White what "to be expendable" means in modern military parlance.

"It's like this" (he said). "Suppose you're a sergeant machine-gunner, and your army is retreating and the enemy advancing. The captain takes you to a machine-gun covering the road. 'You're to stay here and hold this position,' he tells you. 'For how long?' you ask. 'Never mind,' he answers, 'just hold it.' Then you know you're expendable. In a war, anything can be expendable—money or gasoline or equipment or most usually men. They are expending you and that machine-gun to get time. They don't expect to see either one again. They expect you to stay there and spray that road with steel until you're killed or captured, holding up the enemy for a few minutes or even a precious quarter of an hour."

So that's what to be expendable means: it's part of "that grim language of realism which the smug citizenry doesn't understand," the language spoken by "the sad young men back from battle who wander through those plump cities as strangers in a strange land . . . trying to tell of a tragedy which few enjoy hearing." But if their story is not one to be enjoyed it is, in its grim brilliance, in its reminder of others' sacrifice, one that we ought all to read, and remember.

But "War books," however admirable, however essential it is we should read them, should not be our only mental provender; and from many a quarter there come indications of a revived interest in the great books of the past. More than seventy years after his death Charles Dickens is still a very living force. Even the Brains Trusters who, when asked the other day to answer the question, "If you were a novelist, what book would you have been most proud to have written?" agreed with Dr. Julian Huxley in making Pickwick Papers their second choice (Tolstoy's War and Peace was their first, but then the broadcast version had come as a powerful reminder). In London and in many a provincial town, in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the U.S.A., there are branches of the Dickens Fellowship in very active life, and The Dickensian still continues as a very readable quarterly. Well indeed is it that it should be so. Dickens is a mental tonic in these trying times; his characters put to rout those Nazi thugs, those Jew-baiters, those little yellow sadists of the Orient, who make the newspapers such nightmare reading.

From Mrs. A. V. Alexander, wife of the First Lord of the Admiralty, comes the intimation that a flag-day in aid of the work for seamen of six Sailors' Societies is being held in London on April 13—maybe in other places too. For over a hundred years these societies have served those who go down to the sea in ships, and today those men need more than ever the helping hand that these societies exist to hold out, at every port, after every shipwreck. It is impossible to do justice to the magnificent spirit of the men of the Mercantile Marine. Even in peacetime their lot was often a hard one, and now it is one long gamble with death. Buying a flag is surely the very least of our tributes.

In This Oasis a Spitfire Waits for Action

THE R.A.F. 'AT HOME' IN TUNISIA. Beneath the shade—welcome enough, however scanty—of a cluster of cactus trees in the otherwise barren desert the R.A.F. has established a forward aerodrome—one of many, it need hardly be said. A collection of petrol-tins marks the temporary workshop of the mechanics, and what is going forward is obviously full of interest to the Arab youth. An engine-starter battery operated by the flight-maintenance crew stands on the left; and in the background is a Spitfire, ready to take the air. *Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright*

Printed in England and published every alternate Friday by the Proprietors, THE AMALGAMATED PRESS, LTD., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Registered for transmission by Canadian Magazine Post. Sole Agents for Australia and New Zealand: Messrs. Gordon & Gotch, Ltd.; and for South Africa: Central News Agency, Ltd.—April 2, 1943 S.S. *Editorial Address:* JOHN CARPENTER HOUSE, WHITEFRIARS, LONDON E.C 4.